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CHRIST BEARING WITNESS TO HIMSELF.

CHRIST BEARING WITNESS TO HIMSELF.

BEING
THE DONNELLAN LECTURES
FOR THE YEAR 1878-9.

Delivered in the Chapel of Trinity College, Dublin.

BY THE
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S U M M A R Y.

LECTURE I.

	PAGE
A modern legend	1
with excellent credentials	4
is detected by a literary test	5
which test can be applied to the Gospels	6
The plan stated	7
The value of small indications, and of their recurrence in a series of narratives	9
Tact	10
(a) In the discourses	10-14
(b) In the disputed parables	14-15
(c) In the miracles	16-25
St. John contrasts favourably with Euripides	23-25
Renan and Strauss upon the raising of Lazarus... ..	25-26
Evidential value of the confession that the goodness of Jesus had permanent effects upon the legend	26-27
Additional importance of identifying one manner in His works of goodness, because myths would have obliterated these finer lines	27-28

NOTES TO LECTURE I.

J. S. Mill's "Poor stuff"	12
Renan on the "Daughters of Jerusalem"	12
Renan and Strauss on Mary and Martha... ..	13
Strauss on the Parables. The Prodigal Son	15
Renan's inconsistent accounts of the preservation of the cha- racter of Jesus	16
Renan's refutation of the allegorical theory	20

	PAGE
Keim on the cleansing of the leper	18
Contradictory views by Keim and Schenkel of St. Mark ...	18
Traits overlooked or misunderstood. Geikie. Keim ...	21
<i>Philo-Christus</i> on the feeding of the five thousand ...	22
Mr. Emerson's ideal hero	22
Mr. Browning's defence of Heracles	23
Strauss's defective sympathy	24
Improbability of an ungracious legend	26
Keim on the insight of Jesus	26

LECTURE II.

The same tact appears in controversy	33
Christ never merely evades... ..	34
His controversies concerning miracles	36
The controversies in St. John	37
The Gospels agree in remembering Christ's gaze	39
The woman taken in adultery	40
The evidence from style	43
Coleridge upon the style of Shakspeare	43
This test applied to the Gospels	44
Christ's energy	46
His calmness	49
His affluence	52
The miracles are human in their divinity... ..	54
The "sign" is not "from heaven"	54
The appearances after the resurrection	55
The homage of sceptics :	
(a) Strauss... ..	55
(b) Renan	56
(c) Goethe	56
(d) Mill	57
Impossibility of patching and adding to such a conception ...	58

NOTES TO LECTURE II.

	PAGE
Neander upon Christ's cross-examination of the Pharisees ...	34
Renan upon the tribute money	34
"My Father worketh hitherto," Strauss	38
<i>Ecce Homo</i> represents Christ as blushing	41
<i>Philo-Christus</i> upon the gaze of Christ	42
Renan upon the verisimilitude of Peter's fall	43
Keim upon the sayings of Jesus in Matthew	44
Dr. Geikie's treatment of the style of Jesus	47
The temper of Jesus and of Tertullian	49
Strauss upon "the Religious Genius of His age"	56
Mill's two standards of rectitude	57

LECTURE III.

Jesus in St. John. Objection:—The similarities hitherto made good are outweighed by peculiarities in St. John ...	61
Renan's complaints	62
An explanation suggested:	
Formal controversy was inevitable	63
and would modify style	66
yet similarities remain	66
Parallel and reiterated phrases	
(a) In St. Matthew	67
(b) In St. Mark	68
(c) In St. Luke	68
The same in St. John	70
Other similarities of manner	72
His treatment of relatives	73
His mental sufferings	75
His method of illustration	76
His attitude towards nature	78
Dean Stanley's acute remark thereupon	79
Parallel uses of nature in the Synoptics and St. John ...	81

	PAGE
Similarity in the allusions peculiar to the latter	81
Jesus loves as well as uses nature	82
This temperament leads to symbols, 83, and culminates in the institution of sacraments	84
John shows the very sacraments being moulded, and the directly symbolic method	85
Mr. Gregg's objection :—St. John makes Christ self-asserting	85
Answer—(a) Renan finds Him so elsewhere	86
(b) F. W. Newman does the same	86
Schenkel's opinion of the fourth Gospel	88
"Historical unreality" is "essential truth"	89
This is the recoil of scepticism from its own conclusions ...	90

NOTES ON LECTURE III.

Schenkel's exaggerated contrast	62
Keim's admission	64
Strauss objects to narratives of investigation	65
Mill thinks a miracle was not believed to be evidence	65
Keim objects to Matthew's ostentation of refrain	67
Keim on the child Jesus in the Temple	73
Strauss is inconsistent about the agony	76
Keim upon Christ's feeling for nature	78
St. Luke and Mr. Tennyson	80
The symbolic tendency defends the miracles from a suspicion ...	84
Strauss and Keim deny that Jesus asserted himself as in John	86
Renan's inconsistency about mental aberration	87

LECTURE IV.

The portrait requires a supernatural personality... ..	96
Renan refutes Strauss upon the sonship of Jesus	99

	PAGE
The King in His glory with His angels	100
In John, Christ is the Shepherd; in Ezekiel, God	101
In Matthew, Christ judges between the sheep: in Ezekiel, God	102
These are identical traits of character	103
The negative evidence: what He avoids	104
His attitude toward human prayer	104
His attitude toward sin	105
That of Mahomed, of the Buddha, and of the Imitation of Christ	106
Strauss upon Christ as a sacrificial ransom	107
Strauss endeavours to disprove His sinlessness	107
But refutes himself	108
The sceptical dilemma	109
Renan excuses falsehood	110
He contradicts himself	111
Scepticism and the crucifixion	112
The seven words upon the cross	114
Strauss's comments upon them	117
Jesus and Socrates	118
Only the letter is dealt with: the Spirit is still unexplained	119
Renan's comment on the seven words	120
Jesus is too "elevated" for such "tenderness"	121
Conjecture has failed to solve the problem	123

NOTES ON LECTURE IV.

Keim and Schenkel on "Whose Son is He?"	97
Keim on "Come unto Me, all ye"	98
Strauss is inconsistent upon Christ's view of the temple service	107
Strauss accepts the Gospels as testimony for the whole inner life of Christ	109
Renan's defence of fraud	110
His inconsistent language	111

	PAGE
The order of the words upon the cross	115
Schenkel on "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" ...	115
Strauss and Schenkel contradict each other about St. Luke ...	117
An unjust assumption	122
Renan on the agony	123

LECTURE V.

Myths and legends are not inexplicable	129
Rome—The Virgin Queen	129
Contrast between the history and the legends of Mahomed :	
He refused to work miracles	130
He confessed himself sinful	130
Myths and the Buddha	131
How the myths have failed... ..	132
The true story of Gautama, 132, is inconsistent with the	
Buddhist narratives	133
And his tenets with the Buddhist superstitions ...	134
Max Müller upon the contrast	135
What this example proves	138
The contrast with Christianity	139
The Avatar of Krishna	139
A contrast: Christ's courtesy, and Vishnu's	141
The ascendancy of Christ's true character	142
It was attacked, like others, by legend	142
This ascendancy would have prevented His deification ...	143
The alleged influence of Hebrew literature	144
But the heroes of Judaism would have misled	145
This theory is fatal to originality	146
The problem which lay before a Hebrew aspirant	147
The Old Testament is feebly parodied	149
The world is conquered by this feeble plagiarism	152
The resurrection of a faith	154

NOTES ON LECTURE V.

	PAGE
Mahomed confesses himself sinful	130
Titles of the Buddha	131
Mr. Swinburne's theology	135
Max Müller upon the Buddhist superstitions	138
Strauss upon the influence of Christ's true character	142
Strauss owns that the change in the conception of Christ must have been rapid... ..	144
Renan upon Jesus and Old Testament influences	146
Strauss confesses the power of Old Testament precedent	147
Keim's admission upon this subject	147
Strauss, Schenkel, and <i>Supernatural Religion</i> , ignore the con- trast between Old and New Testament miracles; but Keim is aware of it	151
Numerical coincidences and the Book of Joshua	155

LECTURE VI.

What the sceptical theory involves	159
How much of miracle it concedes	160
(a) Renan	160
(b) Schenkel	160
(c) Ewald	160
(d) Strauss	161
A strange inconsistency	162
How the case now stands	163
Scepticism has omitted to explain these consistencies of character	164
The warning of Horace	165
A further difficulty: the energy of this character	166
Unreality is impotent	166
The creations of genius are inert	166

	PAGE
The conception is, moreover, a perfect one ...	167
But frailty is necessary to art ...	168
Mr. Tennyson's "ideal knight" ...	168
Milton's treatment of the temptation ...	169
Shakspeare attempts no perfect beings ...	171
Renan's "Christ in white marble" ...	171
The artistic methods are not employed ...	174
The problem suits our age ...	175
Development and the Christian ideal ...	176
The "struggle to exist," and the worship of the Crucified ...	177
A new force at work ...	179
The impotent man ...	181
How shall we explain Christ ? ...	182
Conclusion ...	183

NOTES ON LECTURE VI.

Renan on the evidence from harmony ...	159
Schenkel's error about the law of leprosy ...	161
Coleridge upon Tragedy and Imperfection ...	168
Renan "divines and conjectures"...	171
Mr. Arnold contradicts Renan ...	173
Is any soliloquy recorded ? ...	174
Christ and Aristotle... ..	179
Goethe on the energies of Christianity ...	182

PREFACE.

IT is the faith of Christendom that Jesus Christ was a supernatural, perfect, and divine man. To the assaults of infidelity we oppose the evident fact that no power existed in the ancient Church capable of elaborating such moral qualities, miracles of such an order, or a humanity so sacred as adorn the Gospel story.

But this is not the whole of our case. Perhaps it has not been sufficiently considered that even if early Christian impulses had rightly combined all admirable qualities, and had discovered the principles on which a perfect Being should wield the powers of Deity, the task would not have been accomplished. When we speak of a supernatural man, a perfect man, and a divine man, we speak

of a man. Great moral qualities and a correct employment of divine power are one thing; a man is another thing. And the doctrine of the Incarnation is not made good by showing that Jesus Christ had great moral qualities, nor by proving that He employed divine powers correctly; the doctrine affirms that He was man.

Readers of Mr. Carlyle have learned to value every one who, even amid grave errors, preserves within himself the freshness of a real human nature, who is "a reality and no simulacrum, a living son of nature, our general brother, not a hollow artifice, son of nothing, *brother* of nothing." Of men who in such sense are alive and see with eyes, he informs us that "the number is not great."

Now the doctrine of a true Incarnation implies, in addition to His supreme virtues, and His divinity, that in this strongest and most vivid sense the divine Person was completely human. Not human *only*; but yet so completely human that in no recorded act

or word of His should the salt of genuine humanity have lost its savour.

And such a Person must have stamped deeply on the minds of His contemporaries not only the recollection of His doctrines and achievements, but, above all, the memory of Himself. For Mr. Carlyle's opinion, that the number of such men is not great, was anticipated (along with many deeper truths) in St. Paul's declaration that the Second Man is the Lord from heaven.

If God's ways are not as our ways the conduct of such a person would, no doubt, be quite unprecedented, and as far removed from that of Moses or David as of Alexander or Mahomed.

But an adequate record of such a life, however surprising we might find it, would almost verify itself. In it we should recognise the warmth, the pathos, and the energy which always tell us that we have found what is spontaneous, unprovincial, unsectarian, unprofessional, unaffected. Our own nature should

be interpreted to us; and yet it is not of ourselves that we should think, and we should no more need the information that a genuine man has been revealed to us than if we had seen Him weep.

When David covers his head and goes barefoot, or cuts the Ammonites with saws and harrows, and when Cæsar strangles Vercingetorix, we depend entirely upon testimony for these events, which are incidents of bygone history, sacred or secular. But when we read the lament of David for Jonathan or Absalom, or Cæsar's dying cry to his ungrateful Brutus, we are no longer occupied with obsolete Hebrew or Roman usages: we hear a man's living voice, and we have a witness within ourselves which anticipates the other evidence.

It is true that such incidents are found in works of supreme art. But the greatest artist cannot sit coolly down and invent a scene of this kind: he surrounds himself with imaginary circumstances and lives there; we are right

when we speak of the truth and reality of his characters, for he has not feigned or imitated; he has inwardly become Prometheus, Hecuba, Faust, Lear. When Macduff pulls his hat upon his brows, and Othello shudders while putting out the light, we are not mistaken who feel that we have come upon realities. We have touched the mighty heart of Shakspeare, which had room for all the experiences that he has shared with us.

But it is not possible that any artist should thus have projected himself into the scenes of our Lord's life. If they are vital, it is not with the vitality of any one of our Evangelists, but with that of Jesus, who must, therefore, have lived and acted as the Evangelists relate.

That much of His story does in this way prove itself, is granted by every opponent whose opinion is worth considering. Now, if a true man bore himself as certain of the narratives inform us, while other incidents are due to the longings and musings of inferior natures—of his vindictive or ascetic or envious

or superstitious followers—the difference must be ascertainable.

We need not argue that one phrase is Ebionite, or that another displeases us by seeming to be prophetic; we have only to consider whether the true Jesus shows Himself in the disputed passage. For there is no truth in Christianity unless the person of its Founder is great enough to be distinguished from all others, and His words and deeds as far above imitation as the Sermon on the Mount is above the Epistle to Abgarus.

The present volume is an attempt to show that the same great Personality is visible in all the Gospels, and is self-consistent throughout every part of them.

It assumes the amazing loftiness of the conception (for that is beyond question), and it proceeds to argue that this lofty conception is throughout so manifest and so vital that ordinary culture and unbiassed judgment should everywhere identify the conception and be conscious of the life in it.

It inquires whether this Jesus of our Gospels is a real man or partly a man, and partly a ghost, a dream, a myth.

M. Renan tells us what effect was produced upon him by a residence in Galilee:—“All that history which at a distance seemed to float in the clouds of unreality took body and an astonishing solidity.” “In view of the recitals of Matthew and Mark, instead of an abstract conception which one would say might never have existed, I saw an admirable human figure which lived and moved.”*

We shall argue that the same vitality is inherent in the four Evangelists; and we shall be assisted in our task by an excellent principle which the same author has laid down.

“A great life is something entirely organic, which cannot express itself merely by an agglomeration of small details. It is necessary that one profound feeling should embrace the whole and give it unity. The method of art in a similar position is a good guide to us;

* *Vie de Jésus*, pp. xeviii., xcix.

the exquisite tact of a Goethe would know how to apply it here. The essential condition of works of art is to form a living system where all the parts are mutually recognised and mutually influenced. Thus, in histories of this kind, the great proof that one has found the truth is to have succeeded in combining the texts in a way which forms a narrative logical, probable, coherent.”*

We assert that no sceptic has done this, M. Renan as little as any other. His Jesus was only possible in a region where “the privilege of wealth was almost useless, and all the world was voluntarily poor;” yet He is an Ebionite denouncing the rich, for Him “avarice is the cardinal sin,” and the rich man “is in hell because he is rich, because he dines well while others at his gate dine badly.”†

He lives every moment in the bosom of God, and is persuaded that God is continually

* *Vie de Jésus*, pp. c., ci.

† Pages 24, 186, 180, 182.

interested in His affairs, yet He resorts to fraud to save His work from failure.*

He succeeds by an amiable character and an infinite charm, a voice of extraordinary sweetness, a beauty pure and sweet, a preaching suave and sweet, by sweet gaiety and amiable pleasantries.†

Yet He is no sooner thwarted than He “transgresses the sane limits of human nature,” utters words which are “like a fire burning life down to the roots and leaving a frightful desert,” and “makes war on the most legitimate cravings of the heart.” His “singular sweetness,” however, “passes off these exaggerations.”‡ One is less perplexed to read that this “singular sweetness upsets all our views of Him” than to discover, in such a series of contradictions, M. Renan’s “one profound feeling” which was to have embraced and given unity to everything.

In the following lectures the *Vie de Jésus*

* Pages 78, 80, 267, 375.

† Pages 84, 158, 174, 196.

‡ Pages 325, 327.

is taken as the most conspicuous example of the legendary theory. The references are to the fifteenth edition, except in a few places where the popular editions are expressly mentioned.

Strauss's *New Life of Jesus* appears to be a fair specimen of the coarser mythical theory, as it is commonly held. The author's subsequent abandonment of so much more, his despair of the problem, his confronting Christianity no longer with a counter-theory so much as a "New Faith"—all this has not prevented his former disciples from holding by another solution of this world-wide phenomenon than the simple calling it a "*humbug*," as he has since done.

It is by the mythical theory that his name will be remembered, and the contradictions of his system are still worth pointing out.

Schenkel's *Sketch of the Character of Jesus* is being zealously propagated by English Unitarians.

Keim's *Jesus of Nazara* is immensely

superior, both in reverence and insight, to any of the above-named works.

To these I have considered that references would probably be useful. The pages are those of the well-known English versions.

My obligations to apologists and commentators are acknowledged in passing; but to Mr. Row I am probably indebted much more than I could specify.

Canon Farrar's *Life* is quoted from the eighth edition, and Dr. Geikie's from the first.

CHRIST BEARING WITNESS TO HIMSELF.



I.

“What is genuine, but that which is truly excellent, which stands in harmony with the purest nature and reason, and which even now ministers to our highest development? We might in some points doubt the authenticity of the Gospels, since those of Mark and Luke were not written from immediate presence and experience, but (according to oral tradition) long afterwards; and the last, by the Apostle John, was not written till he was of a very advanced age. Nevertheless, I look upon all the four Gospels as thoroughly genuine, for there is in them the reflection of a greatness which emanated from the person of Jesus, and which was of as divine a kind as ever was seen upon earth. If I am asked whether it is in my nature to pay Him reverence, I say, Certainly! I bow before Him as the divine manifestation of the highest principle of morality.”—Goëthe, *Conversations with Eckermann*, Sunday, March 11, 1832.

“A complicated unity cannot be evolved by means of a succession of mythological creations.”—Row, *Jesus of the Evangelists*, p. 257.

“ I AM ONE THAT BEAR WITNESS OF MYSELF.”

John viii. 18.

A FEW days after Waterloo, the following account was entered in a famous diary, as having been given by the Duke of Wellington's aide-de-camp:—"During the first and second days we had the worst of the battle, and thought we should lose it. . . . On the third and great day, we suffered most terribly, and three times during the course of the day we thought nothing remained to us but to sell our lives as dearly as possible. Under every charge the Duke of Wellington remained nearly in the same spot; gave his orders, but gave no opinion, expressed no anxiety, showed, indeed, no signs of feeling. They brought him word that his favourite regiment was destroyed, and that his friends had fallen; nay, he saw almost every one about his person killed or wounded, yet he never spoke a word or moved a muscle, looking unchanged upon all the destruction about him. At last, at five o'clock, the fire of the French began to slacken. He ordered a charge to be

made along the whole line, a desperate measure, which perhaps was never before ventured under such circumstances; and when he saw the alacrity with which his men advanced toward the enemy, then for the first time, laying his hand with a sort of convulsive movement on the pistols at his saddle-bow, he spoke, as it were in a soliloquy, and all he said was 'That will do!' In ten minutes the rout of the French was complete." *

Why is it that one smiles at this version of our great victory? Can we produce better evidence for any other account which we happen to prefer, than the words of the Duke's own messenger, noted down upon the day when they were spoken? Yet without striking any balance of authority, or applying any historical method of investigation, you at once reject the fable. "Its incredibility," you answer, "is inherent. No battle was ever gained by such lifeless tactics; no commander ever bore himself thus. And we who know anything about any portion of Wellington's real life,

* *Geo. Ticknor's Journals*, I., pp. 53, 54.

who remember his exultant 'Adieu Portugal,' or his radiance on checkmating Marmont, we are conscious of hopeless incongruity, we feel and know that this is not the Iron Duke, but one made of timber, very wooden indeed."

A little dramatic intuition exposes the counterfeit; we employ a literary test, a critical method.

And thus, while nothing should at first sight be more pleasing to those who would fain melt down Christianity into myth and legend, than a legend of Waterloo, existing in the highest circle within five days of the event, yet upon consideration, the astute unbeliever would refuse its aid.

Before him and us lie four documents professing to be history, the record of an all-important life. In the presence of Him whom these portray, the Christian falls upon his knees, and even the sober sceptic bows his head, revering an august person whom he also discovers there, and whom he confesses to have done for religion all that Socrates did for philosophy and

Aristotle for science, by laying the only foundation upon which all others build, and must build.* Much that is recorded, infidelity admits to be as authentic as the account of Wellington's bearing upon the road to Vittoria, comparing which story with the legend of Mr. Ticknor's diary, we detect the impostor in a moment.

Now the sceptics affirm that a legendary or mythical influence has confused our image of the real and venerable Jesus. They are certain that this influence introduced all that is miraculous into the story, but they agree no further. Some find the true Jesus in Matthew, others in Mark, in Luke, or even in John. They have sore need of a test by which to separate what is real from what is dreamed.

These lectures will endeavour to apply the critical and literary test, to examine the simple undisputed story which all men applaud, and to observe whether at any point the character

* So Renan (*Vie de Jesus*, p. 462), quoted with assent by Strauss (*New Life* i. 45).

ceases to be self-consistent; for such a point should accurately mark the boundary between the genuine Founder of Christianity, and the legendary distortion of the next generation.

We saw how the great captain, energetic, composed, not without natural emotion, disappears in the diary of Mr. Ticknor. We find him again on the next page, and we feel the difference between stone and real flesh and blood, when he answers the congratulations of an officer by saying, "I can think of nothing and see nothing but the guards. My God! all destroyed!" (p. 54).

Even so with the story of Jesus; when we touch the miraculous all will be cold and pulseless if the miraculous be a mere incrustation; and the narrative will recover warmth, its heart will beat again, when we return to the genuine life. Criticism is a poor thing if it knows no difference between the actions of a hero or a saint, and the motions of a puppet. Let us try the experiment, by all means.

Mr. Row, in the *Jesus of the Evangelists*,

has done something like this for the rank and offices of Christ, proving that the same conception of our Lord's glory gives elevation to all the Gospels; that the story had not time, before it was fixed by being written, to climb from a human level to a divine exaltation; and that no forces existed in nature to lift it to such heights, even had time been given. But our attention will now be fixed, not upon the Messianic office, and the endowment of the Christ, but rather upon the humanity of Jesus; and the warmth of His heart is more to us than the gems that sparkle in His crown.

We shall maintain that only the most consummate art, guided by a single and august intellect, can create any consistent character whatever. That the four Gospels exhibit one coherent and vital conception, one and the same individuality, which is entirely and beautifully human even when its works are supernatural. That art is here excluded by the very conditions of the problem, for the Jesus of our Gospels is entirely non-artistic, a conception

on which every well-instructed artist would refuse to labour. And that this conception lies completely outside the domains of myth and legend.

As far as myth and legend are concerned, the strength of this position may be easily tested. There are characteristics too modest to attract their attention, too delicate to excite the energies of primitive religious instincts, without which our age, the child of eighteen Christian centuries, feels that neither power nor devotion would make human nature perfect. Searching for these, we are safe from even an attempt at imposition, and secure also against mythical corruptions of the story. Therefore, if such a characteristic be found, first in the non-miraculous narrative, then also in what are called the supernatural accretions, and finally in the disputed Gospel of St. John, the entire record will be stamped so far with the seal of truth. Its identity will be made good. Jesus will have borne witness to Himself. Such evidence will be decisive in proportion as it is unobtrusive, and only to be discovered by the

patient comparison of a number of small touches. Each of these in itself may be insignificant as a footprint in the sand, but their accumulation will prove as portentous to the unbeliever as, to a general in some complicated piece of strategy, might be the multitudinous footsteps which tell that his adversary has outmarched him.

Such a characteristic is tact, sensibility, quick apprehension of varied human desires and motives, of diverse circumstances and emergencies.

Certainly this attribute is not glittering and prominent enough to attract the ambitious creators of a Messianic legend. It is not suggested by the story of Moses or David, Solomon or Elijah. Yet the history of Christ is full of it. One needs only to seek, as we now proceed to do, and facts which prove the story to be a genuine record of the career of One who possessed this quality, start up for him on every page. We first examine the discourses.

Goſſidding us to take no thought for meat,

drink, and clothing, He remembers to calm our anxiety by adding that our heavenly Father knoweth our need of these things. "A man must live," cries the trembling human instinct, to which Stoicism, ancient and modern, rejoins, "I cannot see the necessity."* Jesus, who is no Stoic, answers, "Your Father knoweth it."

Must His dismayed followers be as sheep among wolves? They are taught that he who endureth to the end shall be saved, and that in bearing his cross the disciple is made like his Lord.

Does John the Baptist send a faltering message? His rank is promptly vindicated against unspoken surmises, as that of a prophet, yea and more.

When the disciples turn pale at hearing that all shall be offended, that Peter shall fall, and the Master shall go away, He is quick to add, Let not your hearts be

* Compare with Dr. Johnson's famous retort, the words of Epictetus: "One whose business it is gives me food. But God, if He does not supply me, gives me a signal for withdrawal [*i.e.*, from life], opens the door, and says 'Begone!' Whither?—To the elements" (iii. 13).

troubled, you cannot trust yourselves, but you may still believe in God, and also believe in Me, and I, who am going away, shall return to receive you unto Myself.*

It is with a despised publican who will not venture to invite Him, yet one whose resources will not be taxed by hospitality, that Jesus, for the first and last time, invites Himself to eat.

When children have been forbidden to draw nigh, it is then that He takes them in His arms.

His cruel journey to the cross suggests to Him the overwhelming wretchedness of women in the siege that is yet to be; and of all the daughters of Jerusalem He pities the mothers most.†

* This is one specimen of the "poor stuff" of which, as Mr. Mill assured us, "the East was full of men who could have stolen any quantity" (*Essays on Religion*, p. 254). Doubtless he meant, "From whom any quantity could have been stolen," or his remark is little to the point, for plagiarists are always common. But these men he judiciously avoids naming.

† The sentiment of Renan is naturally won by this incident. Yet his preconceptions forbid him to see more in it than "the work of a pious and tender imagination," because "the words

Who can fail to identify one and the same manner in His defence of the Magdalene's costly spikenard, of Mary's contemplation,* and of the sinful woman who loved much?

Who does not trace a likeness between these exquisite narratives and that much-disputed story of her whom He pardoned and yet rebuked—"I do not condemn, yet neither do I extenuate; go, but 'go and sin no more.'"

Surely, it is in the same manner that John represents Him as awakening the dormant

could not have been attributed to Jesus until after Jerusalem had fallen" (p. 431, note 3). Yet if this frightful event was only imagined to be retributive, the imagination which conceived it to be so can scarcely have been a very tender one.

* Renan will not so easily acquit Mary. He informs us that "sitting at the feet of Jesus, she *often* forgot in listening to Him the duties of real life." But "she was pleasing to Jesus by a kind of languor, and by speculative tendencies well developed" (p. 354). Strauss, on the other hand, is aware that Martha, dissatisfied with her apparently idle sister, and Mary are only "personifications of Jewish Christianity with its zeal about works, and Pauline Christianity with its inward faith" (*New Life*, ii. 225). The sceptic, incredulous of the Gospels, will doubtless find this theory quite plausible, and consistent with the verisimilitude of the account. Perhaps "Pauline Christianity" was thus represented as indolent, and "Jewish Christianity" as alert, when the Apostle of the Gentiles was collecting everywhere for the poor saints in Judæa.

conscience of the woman of Samaria with the subtle words, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither."

No mariner is more prompt to mark and utilise every breeze, no plant more sensitive of sun and rain, or more skilful to convert one into colour and the other into sap, than Jesus to observe and adapt Himself to the changes of the hearts of men for their salvation.

Precisely the same sensibility reappears in the parables, of which some are denied. He understands the varied feelings of an insulted host whose table is neglected; of a woman whose scanty hoard is lessened; of one who loves and must needs buy the field in which he found his fortune; of a ruined spendthrift, a compassionate father, and a jealous brother; of a loveless heart stung into severer economies with another because he will himself incur debt no more; of a lost soul, not maddened into a fiend, but woefully remembering his brethren; of a steward too soft to dig, yet too haughty to beg. Thus the life is consistent

with the parables, and the parables which scepticism rejects with those which it allows to be genuine.*

* Strauss rejects the parables of the Unjust Steward and the Unjust Judge as turning upon a monologue ("What shall I do? . . . I am resolved," &c.), and so bearing traces of a peculiar hand (*New Life*, i. 153). Now, it is written of the prodigal also, that "when he came to himself he said." And although Strauss suspects this parable also as bearing upon the later relations which existed between Jews and Gentiles, yet the freedom and largeness of its spirit ought to have put it beyond dispute. Indeed, Strauss himself has a remark that seems decisive here. Upon the words "He sendeth rain upon the just and unjust" he says, "If there is a speech in the New Testament which came from the lips of Jesus, this certainly did so, and was not put into His mouth at a later period; for the whole intervening period up to the composition of our Gospels was far too heated, and the views of men were too much contracted by quarrels and fanaticism, to justify us in attributing to it a speech of such cheerful liberality. Here, therefore, we have a fundamental trace of the piety of Jesus: He felt and conceived of His heavenly Father as the personification of this indiscriminating benevolence, and in this His view of God lies the reason of His loving above all to describe Him as His Father in heaven" (*New Life*, i. 279). Now, all this might have been written about the parable of the Prodigal. A heated atmosphere, contracted views, quarrels and fanaticism, are quite as inconsistent with the cheerful liberality which welcomes the prodigal, and assures even the sullen brother that all the treasures of God are for his enjoyment. This benevolence is still represented as a Father's, and in this connection Jesus announces that there is joy in the presence of the angels over one penitent. There is another reason which ought to assure scepticism itself of the authenticity of the parable of the Prodigal. There was never an age in the Church when it was

But now turn to the miracles. We are assured that under the play of legendary forces, "the conception (physionomie) of Him would every day undergo some changes,"* that "the Gospels were corrected at every advance of the theological spirit, new things were introduced and old things were expunged."† So rapidly indeed did the conception of Jesus change,

possible to bestow the title of the Elder Brother of sinners upon any but Him who is not ashamed to call us brethren. There never was any but Jesus Himself who *could* have spoken with such a frank and perfect ignoring of His own right to the title, and indifference to the dishonour which His tale seemed to put upon that epithet.

"Many a loveless brother so, even so—

Scorning the broken and the contrite heart,

And the worn eyes wherein the hot tears start—

When wantonness and dearth have worked their worst,
Forges for misery one still piercing woe,

And him whom God embraces counts accurst.

"Yet, Lord, our Elder Brother, who but Thou

Had left that name to him who bears it now?

Who else had not recorded what pierced hand

Led back the wanderer from the famished land?"

* Renan, p. xci. It is not for us to reconcile this admission with his curious declaration, one page before, that popular stories and legends "certainly bring out with a high degree of accuracy the character (caractère) of the hero, and the impression which he produced" (p. xc.), or again that the "synoptics are enough to recall for us the general conception (physionomie) of the founder" (*Appendice*, p. 477).

† Schwelger, adopted by Strauss (*New Life*, i. 155).

that by the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, He would probably not have known Himself again.*

And in fact we require no assurance that a crowd of legends, born of the coarse desire to magnify Christ's physical power, would soon trample out all the delicate vestiges of a tact which was almost feminine, yet never effeminate, in its grace.

The exploits of legendary stories are distorted, extravagant, and ostentatious. The miraculous story of Christ is not only free from these blots; it exactly agrees with the part we have already examined. The seal of the character stamps the same lines here also.

At the first miracle, the guests know not whence the wine is, for that would humiliate their host.

When a leper kneels to crave relief for his special loathsomeness, Christ shrinks not, nor heals him from a distance; He has compassion on him, and puts forth His hand and touches him. Can this event, recorded by three

* Strauss, *New Life*, ii. 434.

Evangelists, be due to Mark's "love of manipulation?" Does it resemble the self-conscious loftiness of a legend inspired by rivalry of Moses, who cleansed Miriam? *

When one leper out of ten returns, Jesus will not hurt him with the epithet Samaritan, he is "this stranger." Is the event in which this fine trait occurs no more than "an imitation of the conclusion of the history of Elisha and Naaman?"† The feelings of Naaman were so exasperated as to endanger his acceptance of the cure.

When the paralytic lies before Him, Jesus understanding his gloomy memories and sense that his anguish is retributive, says, "Thy sins are forgiven," before saying "arise and walk." ‡

* Strauss, *New Life*, ii. 173. Keim labours to show that Jesus excited admiration and attention, without any miracle, by recognising the fact that this leper had already recovered, and yet insisting that he must not be content without the formal recognition of his cure at Jerusalem (*Jesus of Nazara*, iii. 211—213).

† Strauss, *New Life*, ii. 175.

‡ Upon this subject there is a curious passage in Keim, "As a rule, the miracles increase in marvellousness as they descend from the earlier to the later writers. In Matthew, the paralytic is brought to the Lord upon a bier; in Luke he is let down from the roof; in Mark he is let down through the uncovered roof;

When the woman with an issue of blood seeks a stealthy blessing, Jesus compels her to be frank; but when she kneels trembling, He "instantly" reassures her with the tender words, "Daughter, be of good comfort."

When they tell Jairus that his daughter is dead, Jesus "straightway on hearing the word spoken, says, Be not afraid, only believe."* Nor will He exclude the father and mother from the chamber, though most of His own disciples may not enter; and when the wonder is wrought, it is He who remembers that her vitality, now active, has long been unsustained,

therefore, he is brought to Jesus in spite of the greatest obstacles" (iii. 156).

One is puzzled to see how the difficulty of reaching Jesus adds anything to the marvel of what Jesus does when reached.

And it is a striking proof of the extent to which prejudice warps the judgment, that while Keim thinks the synoptical miracles "increase in marvellousness" to a maximum in Mark, Schenkel finds an evidence that Mark wrote first, in the less wonderful character of his story. "The second Gospel gives much less of a miraculous colouring to several of the evangelical accounts than the first and the third give" (*Sketch of the Character of Jesus*, p. 329. where he enumerates many instances.) It should be remembered also that, as Keim admits, "most modern critics have ascribed the highest antiquity" to this Gospel (i. 115).

* See the original, Mark v. 36.

and bids that something be given to her to eat. How strangely does this tender skill contrast with the notion that this story grew up from the Christian view of death as but a slumber, its theme being, She is not dead, but sleepeth,* or that the incident indeed occurred, but the girl was not dead, and "Jesus was

* Strauss, *New Life*, ii. 207.

M. Renan's answer to all the allegorical theories appears conclusive. "If it were so, then the symbolic and doctrinal aim would be much more conspicuous. Everything in the accounts would have a moral and an intention; He would have none of the circumstances indifferent, disinterested after a fashion, which abound in our account. Nothing could less resemble the biography of a Gnostic emanation; it is not thus that India writes its lives of Krishna, records its incarnations of Vischnou" (p. 489).

Again, "Our Gospel" (St. John) "is dogmatic, I know that, but it is nowise allegorical. The true allegorical writings of the first age, the Apocalypse, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Piste Sophia, have a very different air about them (*une bien autre allure*). At the root, all this symbolism is the counterpart of the mythic system of M. Strauss, expedients of theologians in despair, saving themselves by allegory, myth, symbol. . . . For us, all this is not mythic, nor symbolic, it is sectarian and popular history. . . . Doubtless the Alexandrian school exercised a powerful influence on the theology of the apostolic age. . . . But Philo found allegories in the ancient text; he did not invent allegories. It is the upholders of an allegorical explanation, in this case, who play the part of the Alexandrians, and who, embarrassed by the fourth Gospel, treat it as Philo treated Genesis, as all Jewish and Christian tradition treats the Song of Songs" (pp. 508, 509).

able, by His help-bringing presence, to restore her."*

When the widow of Nain mourns her son, He is less occupied about His own power than her affliction, and before the miracle He says, "Weep not;" and afterward He delivers him to his mother. It is surely a poor explanation of this warm and tender humanity, to say that because there was already a legend about a damsel, this other sprang up about a youth.†

The feeding of the four thousand is inspired by thoughtfulness equal to its compassion,

* Schenkel, p. 113.

† Strauss, *New Life*, ii. 210. To prove the assertion that these delicate marks of thoughtfulness are unobtrusive, it is worthy of notice that Dr. Geikie, who can afford space to water down the words of Jesus with endless expansions, spends not a word of comment upon the courtesy which beautifies this miracle, and omits altogether to mention the care of Jesus that the daughter of Jairus should be fed (*Life and Words*, ii. 113—167). It is lamentable that Keim, whose pure insight has led him to confess so much, should find nothing but "a pseudo-medical method" in the sympathy which touches the leper, and lifts up the sick, and approaches the bier of the dead; that he thinks the provision of "something to eat" for Jairus' daughter, and the care for the unloosing of Lazarus, to be a physician's care for "the diet and rest of his patients" (iii. 134, 135, and note).

In these stories, if anywhere, we can feel the pulsations of that matchless heart.

because they might faint by the way, since many came from far. And His tact provides against a dangerous rush by making the strong and rude men sit down by fifties on the grass, so that these are easily counted, while we know not the number of the women and children. *

He sighs deeply while He says, "Ephphatha," to the dumb man.

He will not snatch away His bound hands to heal Malchus without the gentle courtesy, "Suffer ye thus far," so that the only indulgence which He ever asks of His persecutors was indulgence in beneficence to themselves. † When M. Renan pronounces this miracle to

* Such delicate traits as this ought to disarm the rationalistic theory in *Philo-Christus* (and elsewhere) that it was Christ's wish to have the disciples exercised, during His life, in breaking the Bread of Life by preaching, and they found the exercise so edifying that it was said their own baskets had been filled (p. 214). Such theories may account, after their kind, for the rough outlines of a Gospel story, but they utterly ignore the finer lines which mark off genuine narrative from fiction.

† Compare with this Emerson's demand (somewhat pedantic, yet curiously apposite in its phraseology) that to be a hero one should "take both reputation and life in his hand, and with perfect urbanity dare the gibbet and the mob" (Essay viii., "Heroism").

be "extremely useless" (p. 521) he betrays the failure of all his sentiment to instruct him that a miracle has other purposes than demonstration, and such as no syllogism could replace. Malchus would not have agreed with him.

But the most marvellous exhibition of Christ's power is the crowning evidence of His sensibility. The tenderest of all the Greeks, "Euripides the human," drew no fairer picture than the restoration by Heracles of the wife of Admetos from the grave. Yet the demi-god spices for himself with a little cruelty the tamer bliss of his beneficence, forcing Alkestis, unrecognised, and almost, as they complain, by violence, into the house of mourning, telling her bereaved husband that the longing for a new bridal will relieve his woe, and playing so roughly with the wound he means to heal, that at last the cry is wrenched from the sufferer, "Silence! What have you said? I would not have believed it of you."*

* Mr. Browning in *Balaustion* has devised an ingenious and plausible defence of this remarkable dialogue. But when his

Contrast this Heracles inwardly exulting in his secret, with Jesus when the sisters weep for Lazarus. He weeps with them such tears as legend never invented, tears which myriads of mourners know to be most consolatory, most human, most Divine. Twice He groans, and the word points to some consciousness of a hostile power to be confronted and overcome.* His confident prayer arouses their despondent hearts, and He enlists their co-operation by commanding them to roll away the stone.

And when the great deed is done, when the loved and lost one is restored, at the point when the mighty art of Greece could find no better word for the lips of Heracles than the stupid yet very natural boast, "Thou wilt say, sometime, that the son of Jove is an admirable guest to entertain," then the

lavish subtleties are expended, we still feel that Heracles enjoys and prolongs the needless grief of his friend.

* Strauss is so blind to the whole temper of the incident, as to infer from it that Jesus was angry because the people wept at a death while He, who was the principle of Life, was by! (*New Life*, ii. 219). Yet He Himself wept.

guest of the house of Simon retains His calmness, scarcely seeming to think His miracle an exploit, but quick to observe the restraint and discomfort of the trammeled man, and to recall the bystanders from amazement and surmise to the little services of daily life: "Loose him and let him go."*

Can it be that a story thus alive with genuine character, throbbing all over with human sympathies, was "a little of what we now call fraud," and that Jesus, for His part, "blended with it some small complaisance"?†

Or was this legend of a resurrection but the freezing into prose of that saying in a parable, "Neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead," while the name of that loathsome pauper among the dogs was

* Dr. Geikie records this command with his usual indifference to the tender humanity which it reveals. (*Life and Words*, 1st edition, ii. 334.) Canon Farrar (8th edition) does not record it at all.

† Renan, p. 510. He adds, rightly enough, that if this were not so, the origin of our faith was unlike everything else in the world.

ungraciously transferred to the friend who feasted Jesus, and whom Jesus loved?*

But if not, we have already traced the same beautiful union of quick sympathy with sharp intelligence, resulting in perfect tact, alike in the synoptical Gospels and in St. John's, in what is admitted to be genuine, and in several parables which are disputed, and in the miracles which men pronounce incredible.†

Observe that we are not now occupied with the loving-kindness of the Lord, as such, for that is granted. Hostile criticism admits (but without explaining so very strange a fact) that the carpenter of Nazareth was able to brood,

* Strauss, *New Life*, ii. 213—230. Keim, iii. 162, &c. &c. Of course a legend may act ungraciously; but if this one did so, it is the only specimen of mal-adroitness in the Gospels. This hypothesis, which seems to have allured Renan for a while by its curious ingenuity, is in the later editions decisively rejected. See his careful and interesting appendix upon the historical value of St. John, which he has since partially retracted, but which is most suggestive.

† “In the light of their possessions, their joys and griefs, of their speeches and their deeds, He interpreted mankind, and noted with the self-same sharpness of discrimination the goodness of heart which comes out in the circle of human society, and the race and chase of greed, of ambition, of lust and selfishness, of stormy wrath and humoursome vexation” (Keim, ii. 170).

like the Spirit over chaos, above the confused and stormy whirl of legend, various, fantastic and incoherent, whence the Christ of the Church emerged, bearing the temper and the mind of Jesus. It is maintained that He, who could not restrain His followers from making Him a God, could prevent them from kindling in Him a spark of the vengeance which is God's. But we insist that this theory makes yet larger demands upon our faith. Not only the tradition of His perfect goodness, but its refined methods—the subtle intuitions, the unerring sympathies, the small attentions which seem below the dignity of myths—these have not only survived in the biography, but they have reproduced themselves in the fable.

We have begun to see that the minutest details of this life, confessedly so noble, are verified by delicate consistencies, exquisite unities and harmonies of bearing; that whoever admits any portion of the record, concedes the handwriting by which an expert can verify all the rest.

And as the microscope is a powerful instrument for detecting adulterated foods, because no ingenuity can remove the little differences of mixed and diverse ingredients, so we find our best evidence in the very smallest indications by which the story can be tested. These bear unfaltering witness to the unity of our material. And such evidence was never rendered to any false tale. At the moment when myth and legend lay hands on history, incoherence and dislocation begin.

Like a figure half seen through mist and cloud, what is gained in vastness and majesty is lost in colour and proportion; and if it were thus that Jesus became first supernatural and finally Divine, He should have fared like Arthur as Guinevere saw him last, when

“ More and more
The moony vapour rolling round the king,
Who seemed the shadow of a giant in it,
Enwound him fold by fold, and made him gray
And grayer, till himself became as mist
Before her, moving ghostlike.”

Judge whether the form of Jesus would be made more distinct, more life-like, if the icy

wind of scepticism could blow aside, like an exhalation, all that now elevates our homage into worship, or whether, stripped of this, His predominance over the history and the minds of men would not be portentous and bewildering, as to the weary disciples, without their Master, was the sight of a strange form gliding across the midnight waves. They were troubled, saying, "It is a Spirit," and they cried out for fear. Only in the Gospel story do we recognise the face of the Son of Man, and catch the sound of His loving and familiar voice, which says, "It is I, be not afraid."

II.

“The words of our Saviour Christ are exceeding powerful ; they have hands and feet ; they outdo the utmost subtleties of the worldly wise, as we see in the Gospel, where Christ confounds the wisdom of the Pharisees with plain and simple words, so that they knew not which way to turn and wind themselves. It was a sharp syllogism of his, ‘Give unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s,’ wherein He neither commanded nor prohibited, but snared them in their own casuistry.”—Luther, *Table-talk*, 52.

“THEY SAID UNTO THEM, WHY HAVE YE NOT BROUGHT HIM? THE OFFICERS ANSWERED, NEVER MAN SPAKE LIKE THIS MAN.”—*John* vii. 45, 46.

IN our opening lecture we proposed to test the story of our Lord by a critical method, asking whether it reveals throughout a living personage, a vital and consistent character, and one so peculiar that while honest observers could record what they saw, literature could not create the conception, nor could mythology grope its way to it.

Along this road we advanced a few steps. We were able to verify one modest characteristic alike in the synoptics and John, in the natural and the miraculous accounts. We chose not benevolence as such, because that feature was too prominent to have escaped the attention of the narrators, but rather the quick understanding of situations and of men, which gives to benevolence a peculiar charm, wanting which, the most real kindness always blunders and not seldom wounds, and which is known as tact. This we recognised alike in the words and actions of Jesus. But if it was real, it ought to

be as visible in self-defence as in beneficence. So it will be found. And while we glance rapidly over Christ's controversial methods, a second and more exalted quality will be seen to blend with its acumen. The Embodiment of Truth, the Word of God, could not be evasive, could not oppose to any thrust a mere parry, however adroit, without also advancing some great principle, too appropriate to be turned aside.*

Thus the problem of the woman seven times married is solved by a consideration of the conditions of life beyond the grave.

The question of the tribute money is met by a rule of abstract justice, which His skill has beguiled His adversaries unconsciously to apply.†

* Compare Neander upon the question about the Son of David being David's Lord:—"It might perhaps be inferred from Matthew's statement that, after He had so answered their captious queries as to put them to shame, He sought in turn to embarrass them. But was it consistent with the dignity of His character to ask questions merely for such a purpose? Nothing like it, at all events, is to be found in His words or actions" (*Life of Christ*, p. 402. Bohn.)

† They ask, "Is it lawful to *give* tribute?" He replies, "*Restore* unto Cæsar," because they have owned that Cæsar gave the coinage. Renan accepts and greatly admires this incident: "Profound

When His disciples are accused of Sabbath-breaking, He appeals to the desire of God for mercy rather than sacrifice.

He refuses to satisfy the Pharisees of His authority, not only because they themselves are still sooner silenced by a question, nor even because he is entitled to John's testimony, of which they will not confess the value, but because they abdicate all judicial standing, all right to cross-examine any teacher, if they have no verdict to pronounce upon a doctrine so widespread and so momentous as the Baptist's.*

Yet He proceeds to accept their challenge and to declare Himself, with wonderful boldness

utterance, which has decided the course of Christianity! Word of perfect spirituality and marvellous justice, which has laid the foundation of the severance of things spiritual from things temporal, and placed a basis for true liberality and true civilisation!" (p. 361).

Yet he is so inconsistent as to write again: "To some extent Jesus is an anarchist, for He has no notion of civil government. That government seems to Him wholly and entirely an abuse. . . . Every magistrate appeared to Him a natural enemy of the men of God; He announced to His disciples their contests with the civil powers, without a thought of it as a thing to blush for. . . . *He wished to annihilate riches and power*" (pp. 131, 132).

* This incident, so saturated with the peculiar controversial method of our Lord, carries with it the testimony of the Baptist to Him

and dexterity, in the parable of an only and beloved son, sent among servants who murder him they should have revered. The anecdote cannot be laid hold upon, yet its point is so unmistakable that when He predicts the ruin of the assassins, they cry, "God forbid!" "And He beheld them." One feels also the nature in that picturesque touch, the piercing look which clenched their self-conviction.

Exactly the same habit of mind reappears in the disputes which arise about His miracles.

He will heal on the Sabbath day, upon the broad principle that a man is better than a sheep; or again, because a woman should rather be loosed from the bond of Satan than an ox from the stall.

Once His deadly enemies watch whether He will sin so greatly as to restore a withered hand upon the Sabbath, thus lulling a thousand pangs of body and of heart, fruitless yearnings, vain prayers, self-reproachful memories to rest upon the day of rest. This tacit challenge is apparently accepted, and their malicious hopes grow strong, when He sets the sufferer in their

midst. But when His ironical question makes them the judges whether good or evil is lawful on such a day, they are so frenzied as to expose by their silence the malice which would rather let sin be wrought than avert it by a warning word. Again His reproachful gaze impresses us, for "He looked round upon them in anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts." And the graphic scene is crowned by a surprising climax, delightful in its simple skill, the doing of nothing, the avoidance of any touch, gesture, or even healing word. Who could complain because He bade a man reach out his hand? Yet this was all they saw, except, indeed, that the hand was now restored. They consulted *how* they might destroy Him (Mark iii. 1—6).

In this story of a miracle we recognise again the broad and comprehensive reason, the masterly skill to elude without evading, and even the searching and reproachful gaze.

The same characteristics present themselves in the controversies, as they have already done in the miracles, of the disputed Gospel of St. John.

In the fifth chapter we find the old charge of Sabbath-breaking met by a still more profound and impressive generalisation than before. He claims to perform works of healing upon the Sabbath, because His Father worketh hitherto, because providential energies are not suspended during the Sabbath from creation.*

Or what parallel can be closer than exists between His two appeals from their mercilessly formal Sabbath-keeping—in Matthew to its profanation in the Temple by the priests, and in John to the circumcising of children on that day. Yet one of these, involving no

* This is the only reasonable explanation of the words, and it clearly implies that the creative days were epochs, since the seventh of them continued when our Lord spoke. God's work, if this were not God's Sabbath, would not justify that of Jesus (cf. Heb. iv. 3—10).

Strauss (*New Life*, ii. 171) can find only an allusion to some Alexandrian "doctrine of uninterrupted creation on the part of God," and an assertion that "the same never-resting activity belonged to the Logos as the agent of the operation of God in the world." This would be more plausible if Jesus were defending a claim to create during the Father's Sabbath, which, however, He never advanced. Jesus, when He came to repair and restore our nature, created nothing. His miracles expressed His mission: they never outran it.

miracle, is admitted by Renan,* while the other involves the making of a man every whit whole.

Thus the unchallenged history, and the miracles, and the Gospel of John yield alike these subtle indications of an exalted genius, and the same genius throughout—power to decide practical questions at a moment's notice by lofty principles, and power to baffle a malign craft by the mildest and gentlest dialectics.

Surely, a critic is out of court who takes no heed of such evidence as this, abounding in narratives which have not the glitter of legends, and are too flexible and elastic, too vital, for myths.

Take another indication, which would either evade art, or else would have been made more of by the artist. Twice already we have remarked the power of Christ's searching gaze. In a menacing parable, when His hearers cried, "God forbid!" Luke simply noted his Master's victory by telling that "He beheld them." And again, when they refused to warn Him against a miracle which they counted

* Who cites it as evidence (pp. 235, 236, and elsewhere).

sinful, He looked round about upon them in anger, being grieved. The same formidable gaze re-appears in a hotly-disputed story, and in circumstances too dissimilar for us to suspect that a parallel was intended. His foes, having seized a woman in her shame, would have Him wound, in judging her, either the letter of the law or the more merciful spirit of their institutions. Whereupon, Jesus, of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and unwilling to break, perhaps, that bruised reed by the awful contrast between her soiled womanhood and the majesty of His holiness, stoops down, until their urgency compels Him to declare Himself. Then, drawing Himself up,* He struck not at her, but at their own secret vices, and bending down again, left them unwatched, withdrew for a little the torture of His scrutiny, gave them the option of remaining to face it or stealing at once away. And when He again lifted up the eyes which had been to them like a flame of fire, none had dared to linger but the one whose guilt

* "Looking up into their faces" (Luthardt, *in loco*).

was open, and whom He had not condemned. She would not go until He spoke to her, although unguarded and in mortal peril.*

Again we see Jesus, when the rich man departed in sorrow, gazing round about Him (with eyes which sadden, perhaps, when they rest on such as Judas) while He says, "How hardly shall they who have riches enter the kingdom of God;" and two evangelists are

* Nothing in *Ecce Homo* is so painful as the treatment of this scene, which Canon Farrar seems partially to accept (*Life of Christ*, ch. xl.), and Dr. Geikie also follows (*Life and Words*, ii. 297). "He was seized with an intolerable sense of shame. He could not meet the eye of the crowd, or of the accusers, or perhaps, at that moment, least of all, of the woman. . . . In His burning embarrassment and confusion He stooped down. . . . They had a glimpse, perhaps, of the burning blush upon His face" (chap. x.). We cannot think of Christ, such as *Ecce Homo* fully acknowledges Him to be, as embarrassed and confused. The Physician of Souls should not be "confused" by contact with disease. The frankness with which He calls every sinner to His side is untinged by the burning blush of our shame, which confesses too surely the frailty of our virtues when it does not betray the memory of our sins.

The explanation in the text is Jerome's—"He would give them room to escape." And Augustine says, "He deigned not to heed their fall, but *turned away His look from them*" (*Tract*, xxxiii.). There is more ingenuity than insight in his notion that Jesus wrote on the ground as demanding fruit, for Moses had already written on stone, and they were hard-hearted.

aware of the same intense look* when He presently adds, "With man this is impossible, but not with God."

John describes with the same word† the look which fell on Simon as he received the new name Cephas; and long afterwards the despairing blasphemies of this same Cephas were silenced, and remorse for sin swallowed up the dread of death, when Jesus, pale with vigil, and insult, and anguish, turned and looked on him.‡

* The A.V. has obscured the original by using one word (*εμβλεψας*) to render *θεωρεω*, *βλεπω*, *ειδον*, and *εμβλεπω*.

† *εμβλεψας*.

‡ This power in the gaze of Jesus, common to all the Gospels, but never obtruded on our attention, is strikingly reproduced in *Philo-Christus*. Yet perhaps the difference between a simple narrative and a work of art could not be shown more forcibly than by comparing any of the above passages with the following extracts from that powerful romance:—"When Jesus was come to the bed whereon I lay, He fixed His eyes steadfastly upon me, so that the brightness thereof passed like purifying fire into my soul, and He looked up into heaven and then down upon me, and it was as if He had been wrestling with the evil spirit of faithlessness in my heart and had quite driven it out" (p. 150). And again: "Jesus fixed His eyes steadfastly on the man, as if He saw not the man himself, but the man's angel standing in heaven, bound before the throne of God, with the chains of Satan round him, and all the host of heaven looking thereupon. His countenance also

Surely, this agreement of all the Gospels in a detail so slight and artless, and yet so vivid, puts the veracity of the accounts beyond impeachment of an honest criticism. Yet one of these is the most doubtful passage in the New Testament,* and another leads us straight up to the prediction of Peter's fall.†

There is no evidence which real criticism would value more than that of style. Coleridge avers that "not a sentence of Shakspeare can be read without its being discovered that it

shone as the sun; pity and sorrow were there, but pity and sorrow swallowed up in the brightness and glory of joy and triumph; and the sick man's face gave back the brightness" (p. 152). See also many other passages. But none of these laboured pictures of a lofty and electrifying presence do anything toward explaining the influence exercised by the preaching of Christ upon persons who never saw Him. This rock, which shipwrecks Renan, will be fatal to *Philo-Christus* also.

* The argument of these lectures is evidently unable to touch the question whether that passage should retain its present place in the eighth chapter of St. John. If the conduct of our Lord is authenticated, the object of our investigation is fulfilled. Nor need the sober Christian be very anxious to decide the rest.

† Renan, examining St. John's account of the Denial, remarks that "some of the details are of an astonishing truthfulness." Yet the story drops to pieces if the prediction and the sign are abstracted from it.

is Shakspearean," and that his share of Pericles "may be recognised to half a line."* If this assertion be, perhaps, exaggerated, yet it is nearer to the truth than any scheme which would reject one group of plays for turning upon the supernatural, and others for being more introspective than the rest.

Yet some parables of Jesus are rejected for turning upon monologues ("He thought within himself," or "I am resolved what to do")† without any adequate comparison of the mental characteristics in Christ's admitted words, and in those which are so rashly cast aside.

It is right and sagacious to observe the manner of Jesus in "pregnant texts invaluable for the clear penetration, the unerring common sense contained in them, . . . in which truths that are every day getting fresh corroborations are enclosed in a form which exactly suits them, and is universally intelligible."‡

* *Shaksp. Notes and Lectures*, p. 72.

† Strauss, *New Life*, i. 353.

‡ *Ibid.* i. 347. Cf. Keim's words, "The sayings of Jesus especially" (*i.e.*, in Matthew), "besides being characteristic of their

But this test assuredly authenticates the rejected though pregnant text, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee, then whose shall these things be?" and "Unto him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly."

You reject the parable of the rebellious labourers for pointing toward the destruction of Jerusalem? But why not place it and some undisputed parable side by side, like two pictures, to contrast the firm touch of the Master with the feebleness and hesitation of his pupil? You are never tired of reproaching us for preferring theology to science. But if scientific criticism finds the true manner of Jesus in passages which involve a prediction, then your theological prejudice against prophecy

time, have all the signs of an exalted and reticent originality, of a Divine sanctity and force, so that even a single word, full of the ancient wisdom that was soon lost in the Church, bears the stamp of a spirit of development which no Evangelist, Jew nor Gentile, nor even Paul himself, would have known how to invent" (i. 91). Now the exaltation, the reticence, the originality, the sanctity, and the force are nowhere more strikingly combined than in passages of Luke which Keim rejects. The story of the rich man and Lazarus unites them all. But yet it is condemned as "Ebionite."

will be just as unscientific as any theological prejudice against the antiquity of man.

For our part, we open the Sermon on the Mount, and the stories of the seed, of the good Samaritan, and of the prodigal son, all which, so far as our present argument requires, have been admitted.* We mark their latent fire, their swift energy, their sense of prodigious depths in human ruin, and altitudes in human blessedness. When slandered and hated of all men for Christ's sake, men should rejoice and leap for joy. The hypocrite blows a trumpet when he gives alms, the disciple hides it from his left hand. Swine trample and rend. Rains, rivers, and winds together fall upon the house which falls not.† They smite upon the house which falls, and the ruin of that house is great. The good seed is trodden down, or scorched, or choked, or else it bears fruit abundantly. The plundered man is beaten and wounded, and left naked and half dead. The prodigal is riotous, the

* Strauss, *New Life*, i. 348—354.

† προσεπεσαν . . . επεσε.

famine is mighty, he desires in vain the husks of swine, he perishes for hunger, while hired servants have bread enough and to spare; his father sees him a great way off, runs, falls upon his neck, kisses him, gives the gold ring, the best robe, the fatted calf; they are merry, their music and dancing resound outside the house.

We should recognise, when we meet again, all this concentration, this energy, this nerve, this fulness which is not redundant, this movement which never flags.* And we know them

* This evidence of style can scarcely be so well appreciated in any other way as by reading any verse of our Lord's discourses, and then turning to Dr. Geikie for the same sentiment done into fine English. We annex a few specimens from the *Life and Words*, and an attentive reader will discover for himself the verse of which the substance is given, the fine aroma having exhaled.

1. "You search the Scriptures, professing to wish to find life, and yet refuse to accept me! How self-contradictory and self-condemning! I do not reproach you thus from any feeling of wounded pride, for I care nothing for the applause of men" (ii. 101)

2. "Rise, poor man, take up the bed on which you have been lying, and go home" (ii. 32).

3. "I go farther than the Scribes, for I declare, as the Fulfiller of the Law, that unrighteous anger is worthy of the full punishment they attach to its over-result in homicide; nay, more, I declare the expression of such anger in bitter words as incurring (*sic*) the danger of hell" (ii. 67).

in such words as these, "Bring them hither and slay them before mine eyes" . . . "the lightning that lighteneth from one part under heaven shineth unto the other part," and in that intense pathetic appalling accumulation of brief details: "in hell—he lift up his eyes,—being in torments,—and seeth Abraham—afar off,—and Lazarus in his bosom;—and he himself cried saying,—Father Abraham,—pity me."

It is ridiculous to say merely that some of these were evidently introduced after the destruction of Jerusalem, and that the last has an Ebionitish foundation,* while ignoring a power as thrilling as Shakspeare's, which very power you have granted to belong to Jesus.

4. "See, said He, that you learn from this tree to have firm trust in God. Believe me, if you have such faith, and let no doubt or wavering enfeeble it, you shall be able to do not only such things hereafter as ye have seen done to this tree, but—to use the expression you so often hear from the Rabbis when they intend to speak of overcoming the greatest difficulties, or achieving the most unlikely ends—you will be able, as it were, to bid this mountain" &c. &c.

In these changes the fine edge is ground off that word of God which is sharper than any two-edged sword.

A little of the space they occupy would have sufficed to record the fact, which Dr. Geikie has unhappily forgotten, that Jesus upon the cross said, "I thirst."

* Strauss, *New Life*, i. 352, 355.

And it was surely the same tenderness which inferred the behaviour of Eternal God from the conduct of a father when his child asks for the simple lake-side fare—fish, or an egg, or bread; and which drew for us the father of the prodigal, and the tormented wretch pitying his brothers, and Abraham's gentle words, "Son, remember."*

We cannot call it a higher criticism which is blind to evidence like this.

Yet with all this energy, the possessor of unearthly powers, who ever communes with God His Father, will certainly be calm. If He must be left alone, He will think, "Yet I am not alone." When His disciple betrays Him, He will say, "Comrade, wherefore art thou come?" Threatened with death, He can answer, "Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above."

* We do not fully perceive the elevation of these words above their time, and the utter impossibility that they should be forged, until we compare them with the notorious passage in which Tertullian ranks high among the raptures of heaven the sight of the agonies and contortions of the damned.

This is evident enough; but it was not so easily woven into the texture of an intricate narrative. If it had been part of the temperament of a Hebrew sage, the enormous changes required in order to graft upon his story every miraculous event and every superhuman attribute, would certainly have disturbed his quietude, and have betrayed him, sooner or later, into some theatrical attitude, some vaunting utterance, some exhibition of self-consciousness, something of stage-play.

But nowhere is the calmness and balance of the mind of Jesus more striking than in the record of His miracles. They never startle Him out of the sober methods of daily life; his view of them is quiet, almost business-like, impossible to legend. We have seen Him restoring the youth of Nain to his mother, commanding that the daughter of Jairus should be fed, and that Lazarus should be released; speaking to the paralytic, not of the wonder of his cure, but of his duty to sin no more. When the water becomes wine, they should bring it to the governor; when the leper is

cleansed, he must show himself to the priest; when bread is multiplied, the fragments must not be lost; when the last great draught of fish is taken, they are to be brought to shore for use. When the seventy return from their first mission, elated, intoxicated with their mastery over the petty fiends which torment petty men, crying, "Lord, behold, the very devils are subject to us in Thy name," Jesus, unflushed, reverts to some awful spectacle seen upon some far-off day—the day of the ruin of the very Prince of the Devils—and He answers, "I beheld Satan, as lightning, fall from heaven."

This is the spirit in which He always refers to His miracles,* but it is especially conspicuous in St. John. To others they are "wonders" and "mighty works," but to Him they are chiefly "signs," fraught rather with import than surprise, or simply the natural "works" of such a worker, or "good works" which suggest His affection rather than His

* Inasmuch that Renan reproaches us with it as a suspicious circumstance. See his chapter on Miracles, *passim*.

force; or, more expressive still, they are what "the Father sheweth" and what He "seeth the Father do."

Calmness, like tact and sensibility, pervades equally the discourses, the life, the miracles. And herein the story harmonises not with itself alone, but also with the character of Him who is not in the storm, the earthquake, or the fire, but in the still small voice. It is not the quietude of a pool in its stagnation, but of the unfathomable depths of ocean. The calm of Jesus is the repose of God.

This last remark applies equally to another trait. God is lavish. He fills all things living with plenteousness. His paths drop fatness. The blessings He offers are more than there shall be room to contain. And though Jesus had not where to lay His head, and sought figs by the wayside for His hunger, there is opulence in His thoughts and ways. To Him it was no waste that love should pour out costly ointment and break the alabaster box. He tells of feasts where oxen and fatlings are killed and all things ready, where there is room, after

the lanes of the city have been searched, to admit the country-side as well.

In the Gospel miracles there is a well-known "principle of economy" which forbids them to be wrought without necessity, or to go beyond the need. The stone is not miraculously taken from the grave of Lazarus, nor the grave-clothes from his hands and feet, and this makes it the more noteworthy that Jesus is as lavish as the Father. He breaks the net with a draught of fish; He twice multiplies bread so profusely that the fragments are greater than the first supply. In St. John He alarms for ages the scruples of our timid moralists by adding one hundred and thirty or forty gallons, the annual consumption of a household, to the store of wine which has already been consumed; and having provided fish on the coals and bread, he gives an hundred and fifty and three great fish besides, and calls for an addition to their feast from these. His bounty never supplies any luxury, but it never stops short of a magnificent profusion, like that which covers over the valleys with the corn.

Yet His miracles shed more light upon His human character than even upon His superhuman power. To express what is not only right in the abstract, but right in the breast of man, they have parted company with those Old Testament prodigies whence German scepticism would fain evolve them, and which myths would certainly have copied.

It is a common-place of theology that Jesus invokes no higher Name in which to work His miracles, but says, "I will;" "I am the Resurrection and the Life." But this is a fragment of the truth. Because the centre of miraculous power is shifted from heaven to earth, not only are phrases and invocations modified, but the very temper of the events is changed.

What subtle instinct held back the early myths from granting "a sign from heaven," as if it were still from heaven, and not from a human breast, that God should manifest Himself? How could they foresee that to meet so plausible a challenge would be fatal to that Christian theology which, we are assured, had

not yet taken form? Yet they have escaped the snare.

You see God the Avenger when the Nile runs blood, when fire consumes the fifties, when the flame licks up the Sacrifice on Carmel. But in the miracles of Jesus you see the Brother of mankind. How unlike the coldness of philosophers and the vehemence of heroes! How impossible a product from popular blind longings that He should emulate the wonders of Moses and Elias!

Precisely the same humane motive verifies His appearances after the resurrection. Their ground-idea is not the overthrow of His foes, but the drying of His people's tears. It is "Woman, why weepest thou?" "Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad?" It will even direct their fishing, and bid them "Come and dine."

Recall now the concessions of the sceptics concerning so much of Jesus as they accept. Strauss finds "a beautiful nature from the first,

which only needed to develop out of itself," and speculates upon the chance of any one arising "in whom the religious genius of modern times should become flesh, as the genius of *His* time did in Him."*

Renan owns "the incomparable man," "without whom all history is incomprehensible, to whom every one of us owes all that is best within himself," and who "has advanced religion as none other has done, or probably ever shall do."†

Goethe looks upon all the four Gospels as unquestionably genuine, for there is in them the reflection of a majesty, radiating from the person of Christ. "If I am asked," he says, "whether it is in my nature to pay Him reverential homage, I answer, Undoubtedly. I bow

* *New Life*, i. 282, 283. It is not a mere verbal quibble upon this passage to remark that no age could possibly crucify its *own* religious genius, whatever outrage it might inflict upon the genius of an earlier or a later age, if he were within reach. Him every age crucifies in the spirit. But it is one fatal blot upon this theory that it requires to make Jesus a natural product of His age, "the genius of *His* time." How then were all men, or any men, offended because of Him?

† Pages 19, cv., 294, 19.

before Him as a Divine revelation of the highest principle of morality.”*

Mill confesses the “unique figure, not more unlike His predecessors than His followers, even those who had the direct benefit of His personal teaching,” and declares that neither the first apostles nor St. John “was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining His life and character,” and he decides that “when this pre-eminent genius is combined with the qualities of perhaps the greatest moral reformer, and martyr to that mission, who ever existed upon earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor even now would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract to the concrete, than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life.”†

* *Conversations with Eckermann.* Sunday, March 11, 1832.

† *Essays on Religion*, p. 253—5. Mill himself had another standard. Of the lady who was Mrs. Taylor before she became Mrs. Mill, he wrote, “Her memory is to me a religion; and her approbation the standard by which, summing up as it does all

Certainly an august life was lived. Certainly the records of that life are the most elevated and the most influential histories in the world. Do you think that any three authors of diverse mood, let them be as great as ever flourished in one age and country—Spenser, Shakspeare, Bacon—could have arranged an assortment of fables, so improbable that in the name of science you reject them at first sight, yet every one united to the rest not only with bands and cords, but far more closely by such delicate fibres as we have traced, all forming one symmetrical design, all in the true method of the Incomparable Man, all provoking the race to love and to good works, all revealing the profound abysses of a sacred and stainless character? Do you think that three Galileans of the year seventy could have done this, and that an Asiatic mystic of the next century could have revised their narrative and revolutionised their doctrine without impairing the design?

worthiness, I endeavour to regulate my life" (*Autobiography*, p. 252). Of that religion "The Subjugation of Women" is perhaps the gospel.

III.

“If the Gospel of John is not the historical narrative of an eye-witness, but a myth, then we have no historical Christ. It is either a piece of the blindest superficiality or the bitterest irony to beguile us into the belief that an organised Christianity can still exist.”—Bunsen, *Bibelwerk*, p. x.

“ HE THAT SAW IT BARE RECORD, AND HIS RECORD IS
TRUE, AND HE KNOWETH THAT HE SAITH TRUE, THAT YE
MIGHT BELIEVE.”—*John* xix. 35.

WE have now examined in two lectures the smallest and least conspicuous characteristics of the story of our Lord. We have not insisted on the main conception, so unique and admirable, so grand and holy,* which, however, might possibly, men say, be an idealisation accomplished by affection, reverence, and awe.

We devoted ourselves to details. We found the same intellectual readiness in benevolence and in debate, the same commanding gaze, the same quick and powerful utterance. We identified all these in the ordinary portions and the miraculous, in the synoptics and St. John.

But it is urged that whatever likenesses we may discover, they are outweighed, in one

* A brief, but excellent examination of this subject may be found in the 10th chapter of Bushnell's *Nature and the Supernatural*, and has been reprinted separately under the title of *The Character of Jesus*. Scientific students will turn, of course, to Ullman.

important respect, by graver dissimilarities, and that a fatal difference exists, both in manner and substance, between the discourses of Jesus in the earlier Gospels and in the fourth.

The quick, luminous, unrestricted play of happy imagery, trustful exhortation, and open-hearted invitation, so like the sparkling of sunbeams on calm waters, is overshadowed, and in its place we find disheartening controversy, and resolute self-assertion. Of this contrast educated scepticism makes the most,* but there

* Persons who receive sceptical assertions without caution may find a warning in the extraordinary exaggerations of Schenkel upon this subject. He complains that in John's Gospel "from the first His disciples believe on Him with complete faith" (p. 23), although an influx of deeper conviction is recorded after the miracle at Cana, and by the tomb of Lazarus, and when Jesus spake plainly (ii. 11; xi. 15; xvi. 30); and although He distinctly appeals to them to believe (xiv. 1), if only for His work's sake (xiv. 11). His work is "specially opposed to the Jews" (p. 30), in spite of His declaration that salvation is of the Jews (iv. 22). We find "no trace of a continual validity of the Old Testament law" (p. 27), as if we certainly found this in the others—in Mark, for example, who is Schenkel's chosen guide. "In the fourth Gospel Jesus speaks of the Old Testament law as of something foreign which did not concern Him" (p. 26); "He puts His teaching in unmistakable opposition to that law, and only in His teaching, not therefore in the law, is truth" (p. 27). Yet He says, "Moses wrote of Me," "the Scriptures are they which testify of Me," "and the Scripture cannot be broken" (v. 46, 39; x. 35).

is nothing to prevent a Christian from a frank though qualified admission of the fact.

The first need of the Church was to learn its Master's undisturbed spontaneous methods, how He won and trained His disciples, how He taught, in the happy days when men would listen, by the hills and waters of Galilee.

But no such records could exhaust the experience of One whose enemies at last crucified Him.

Without any Gospel of John, we should divine that He was interrupted, contradicted, brought to bay, driven to the self-assertion which is pronounced so strange. It is not unnatural, after all, that if Jesus found Himself among bitter controversialists, He should adopt for awhile that "intention of proving a theme, and of convincing adversaries," which is so painful to M. Renan. The airy Frenchman, who goes to war with a light heart, may announce when plunging into the depths of this controversy that he "absolutely interdicts religious polemics," but a graver student of life would look askance on one, in the position of our Lord, who showed

no intention of proving something or convincing any one.

A Messiah should be many-sided. A teacher whose only gift was that of "admirable flashes," "the fine raillery of a man of the world," and even that "peerless charm" which St. John is declared to want, would scarcely have survived the first shock of solid opposition, to march in the van of nineteen centuries with unwearied feet.*

Turn from the Sermon on the Mount to the discourse at Nazareth, or to the woes launched against the Scribes and Pharisees, and all that vituperous brood,† and own that the Jesus of the earlier Gospels displayed the "vigorous individuality" which repels His critic, as truly as the "clearness, transparency, and impersonality" to which he would fain shut Him up.‡

Now, the time must have come when the

* For the above remarkable phrases, see *Vie de Jésus*, pp. lxix., iv., lxx., 358, lxix.

† Admitted by Renan, p. 363, *et seq.*

‡ Page lxxix. Keim (iii. 20) admits that the Sermon on the Mount contains, "bellicose, more than Johanninely sharp and bitter theses."

bearing of our Lord in set controversy would be a subject of profound interest and importance, and when a record such as John's ought to complete the apostolic memoirs.* So far, therefore, from John's controversial tone being suspicious, it is in his favour that he supplies a want, which must have been early felt, which it cannot have been impossible to meet, and for which no rival supply has been forthcoming.†

* And however suspicious it has appeared to Strauss that he should relate formal investigations into various cures, in which "the fact is laboriously ascertained in a manner unknown to the older evangelists" (*New Life*, ii. 157), yet even from these we learn enough to be sure that many an investigation must have happened, which it was not within their plan to record in greater detail.

J. S. Mill, on the contrary, characterises that age as one "when no one thought it worth while to contradict any alleged miracle, because it was the belief of the age that miracles in themselves proved nothing" (*Essays on Religion*, p. 237). No doubt this would make it very easy for any one to assert a miracle—if it were still worth the while of any one to assert it. But why should any one do so? What is the object of the miraculous claims of the Synoptics and John, the Acts and the Epistles? How did it come to pass that the new teachers *profess* to have relied so largely upon what were regarded by every one as utterly meaningless and insignificant? And what is the meaning of John's assertion, true or false, that they were, as Strauss puts it, "laboriously" investigated.

† If we might suppose that John, writing "that we might

Now, this implies a modification of our Lord's style, because the surroundings are entirely changed. He compares Himself to a shepherd and a physician: and these will behave differently towards a sheep and a wolf, towards a patient and a charlatan. Nor can we sufficiently admire the complaint that Jesus, in Jerusalem and driven to bay, has "protracted arguments after every miracle," and no longer "pleases a man of taste with delicious sentences."*

But we assert that we can identify, as already in two lectures we have largely identified, the same mental and moral traits in John, and even in his most controversial passages, which give colour and expression to the synoptical portraits of the Lord, and that coincidences may be discovered at every point, ranging from those purely verbal ones, which scholars have certainly made good, to those

believe," included in his plan a conscious reference to these controversies, we should understand why the scene of his narrative is laid chiefly in Jerusalem, which was naturally the stronghold of the priestly faction.

* Renan, p. lxxvii.

which reveal something of the deepest mysteries of His personality.

We have already in our last lecture appealed to a certain energy, thrill, and rapidity of style ; and this argument might be extended almost indefinitely.

The synoptical discourses of our Lord reveal a tendency to parallel and reiterated phrases, and balanced sentences, which does not appear in them except when He speaks ; and which well becomes, in its Hebrew tone, the Son of Abraham and David, and the Prince of the House of Judah.*

You discover it in Matthew.† “Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time . . . but I say unto you,” recurs like a refrain.

One “shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven ;” another “shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

* Keim professes to find (in Matt. vi.) “an artificial ostentation of refrain” (iii. 328). Yet he immediately afterwards admits the passage to be genuine, though misplaced in the Sermon on the Mount.

† Matt. v. 21, 27, 33, 38, 43, 19, 20 ; vii. 25, 27

“The rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house” balances each clause of the stately antithesis which consummates the Sermon on the Mount.

Both Matthew and Mark* remember the rhythmical warning, “If thine hand offend thee, cut it off . . . if thy foot offend thee, cut it off . . . if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee;” and Mark adds the thrice-repeated dirge-like chime, “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”

Luke records many such parallelisms.† “Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, but unto none of them was he sent.” “Many lepers were in Israel in the days of Eliseus, but unto none of them was he sent.”

“The Queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and shall condemn them,” and so shall the men

* Matt. v. 29, 30. Mark ix. 43, 45, 47 ; 44, 46, 48.

† Luke iv. 25, 27 ; xi. 31, 32, 42—44, 46, 47, 52 ; xvii. 34—36.

of Nineveh, for "a greater than Solomon," and "a greater than Jonas, is here."

We catch the reverberation, deep and terrible as thunder-shocks at midnight, of "Woe unto you, Pharisees;" and again, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites;" and again, "Woe unto you, lawyers;" and again, "Woe unto you;" and yet again, "Woe unto you, lawyers."

"Two shall be in a bed, and two at the mill, and two in the field, of whom one shall be taken and the other left."*

Now it will scarcely be pretended that John copied the style of the synoptical discourses, for it is denied that any similarity exists. The peculiarity which we are examining is not prominent in his narrative, nor could it be, since he is charged with recording controversies rather than discourses. And it is also less adapted for those intimate conversations which he has preserved.

* The third clause must be obtained rather by collation with Matt. xxiv. 40, than claimed upon the worse than doubtful authority of Luke xvii. 36, where its absence from the best MS. shows that the common feature has not been obtained by concert or imitation.

Yet the tendency may be clearly discerned.

To Nicodemus, Christ says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God . . . except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (iii. 3, 5).

And again, "The Son of Man must be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life . . . God gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (iii. 15, 16).

The woman of Samaria heard the same recurring cadences:—

"The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth . . . they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (iv. 23, 24).

In the sixth chapter we read, "I am the bread of life . . . I am that bread of life." "The bread of God is He that cometh down from heaven . . . this is the bread that cometh down from heaven . . . I am the living bread that cometh down from heaven"

(vi. 35, 48; 33, 50, 51). "And I will raise it up at the last day . . . and I will raise him up at the last day;" and again, "I will raise him up at the last day" (vi. 39, 40, 44).

In the tenth chapter, "I am the door," and "I am the good Shepherd," both recur (7, 9; 11, 14).

In the fifteenth chapter, "This is My commandment, that ye love one another," is followed by "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another" (12, 17).

Of all the "notes" of an individual style, perhaps this was the most likely to dwell in the memory of His hearers. In John it is neither exaggerated nor obtruded, but it certainly exists. And it has influenced his own manner, as was inevitable for him who leaned his spirit and his head alike upon his Master's bosom. The finest literary workmanship would have been perplexed to render it with so light a touch, and its delicacy has repeatedly baffled our translators, who missed, for example, the identity of phrase, "I lay down My life for the sheep," and "The good Shepherd layeth

down His life for the sheep.”* It could not have been the work, first of legendary impulses, and again of a deliberate forger in the interests of dogma, without losing either the resemblance or the variety. It binds together what every sceptic confesses, and what none dares to admit, the Sermon on the Mount with His prophecy against Jerusalem, and the denunciation of the Pharisees with His claim to an astonishing rank, and a name above every name.

Strauss himself observes that when the deaf-and-dumb man of St. Mark is healed, the sigh and the upward look “give an effect to the scene, which we only find repeated in the history of the raising of Lazarus,” and admits that “the fundamental principles of the earlier Gospels are in close connection with those of the latter, and are assumed by it even in particular narratives.”†

The same confidence which inspired the answer to a menace, “I must walk to-day

* John x. 11, 15. So they failed to reproduce the parallelism in John xv. 2, 3, καθαίρει . . . καθαροί.

† *New Life*, ii. 179; ii. 4.

and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected," is here in the reply to His trembling friends, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not."*

The same lofty pretensions which made Him say, "They have called the Master of the house Beelzebub," are in the words, "Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well."†

Four narratives of diverse origin never invented so harmonious a group of incidents as those which tell how firmly He repressed the intrusions of His relatives. "Thy father and I have sought Thee" is answered, "I must be about My (true) Father's business."‡ The

* Luke xiii. 33. John xi. 9.

† Matt. x. 25. John xiii. 13.

‡ "It does seem to us, after all has been said, that this fine, tender picture, in which neither truth to nature nor the beauty which that implies has been violated in a single line, in which youthful strivings, *in their truth and error alike*, are drawn with such depth of meaning, picturing so completely beforehand the stages of His after-life, cannot have been devised by human hands, which left to themselves were always betrayed into coarseness and exaggeration" (Keim, ii. 137).

This is one of the multitude of passages which show that Keim, the most reverential of the liberal critics, has insight proportioned to his reverence. The "error" he alludes to is, indeed,

maternal request for a miracle at Cana meets the repulse, "I must obey My own motives and await My own time." The attempt of His family to control, or at least to interrupt His teaching, raises His disciples to the level even of His mother. His brethren's challenge to show Himself openly evokes a sharp contrast between His time and theirs. And upon the cross He bids His mother to regard another as her son.*

John has been blamed for bringing Him into opposition with the law,† but on the Mount also He reverses the decisions of old time.

As in John one band of officers returns without having taken Him, and another band goes backward and falls before Him, so in Luke He passes through the midst of His enemies and goes His way.‡

In Matthew He forbids the disciples to

his own, that "the upward yearning confined itself to the walls of the Temple, the place of God's abode" (p. 133).

* Luke ii. 48. John ii. 4. Matt. xii. 50. John vii. 6; xix. 26.

† Schenkel, p. 26.

‡ John vii. 46; xviii. 6. Luke iv. 30.

enter any city of the Samaritans; and in John the same reluctance is implied in the words, "He must *needs* go through Samaria," He is driven to it.*

A preference for Jews, which does not entirely exclude the Gentiles, binds together the story of the Syro-Phœnician woman with that of her who worshipped she knew not what.†

It is pretended, because the agony of Gethsemane is unrecorded by John, that he shrank from it as inconsistent with his theology;‡ yet he often tells of Christ's agitation, of His soul being troubled, of His saying, "Father, save Me from this hour," His reluctance to be "left alone," His sad expectation of treachery and desertion, His proposal to arise and go hence, yet lingering on—everything which makes intelligible the anguish of that awful hour.§

* Matt. x. 5. John iv. 4.

† Mark vii. 27. John iv. 22.

‡ Schenkel, p. 280. Strauss, *New Life*, ii. 327.

§ John xi. 33; xii. 27; xiii. 21; xvi. 32; xiv. 31. While Strauss is quite satisfied that John omits the Agony as incon-

In John He declares that unless He die He abideth alone, and in the others His death and resurrection precede the commission to convert the world.*

The same identity can be shown in those illustrations with which His thought loved to clothe itself. And nothing could be more difficult to reproduce than a style so unstrained and simple, and yet rich in its appeals to the analogies of nature.

The author of the fourth Gospel would, indeed, be a remarkable product of that age if he added to all those other exploits which scepticism ascribes to him a spontaneous success in this field also. Spontaneous it must have been, for there is assuredly no laboured imitation. He has not been tempted to give us one parable, even when his matter could most easily have assumed this form.

sistent with his Logos-doctrine, he nevertheless declares that the trouble of Christ's soul when the Greeks desire to see Him is a combination of that same Agony with the story of His transfiguration (*New Life*, i. pp. 297—8). Yet even Keim declares that Jesus, in the Gospel of John, "does not struggle and does not suffer."

* John xii. 24. Matt. xxviii. 19.

Few images re-appear in the same form and connection as before.

But the imagery belongs to the same mind: it is drawn from the same field of observation; and it equally with the rest befits the Messianic claim.

In the earlier Gospels men are servants of God, with talents to improve or a vineyard to cultivate; it is not until the last discourse in St. John that He calls them no more servants.

In the former a well-beloved Son is only sent forth when all the servants have been repulsed; in John it is no servant, but the Son, who abideth for ever.

In Luke the prodigal joins himself to one who sends him to feed swine; in John, he that committeth sin is the servant of sin.

In Luke, the penitent remembers the abundance of his father's house; in John, we read that in the Father's house are many mansions.

In Luke, the maid is not dead, but sleepeth; in John, our friend Lazarus sleepeth. John does not formally command .

us to become as little children; but he alone records the saying that we must be born again, and the fact that once, only once, Jesus called His disciples little children.*

But in this connection the Lord's attitude towards Nature is what best deserves our study.† From His true manhood we are entitled to expect that the places where Nature spoke to His deepest soul would be the scenes of His quiet and secluded youth. For it is in solitude, and while the din of action and even the demands of human sympathy are still at a certain distance, that one most easily catches the low, calm whispers of the universe of God.‡

* Matt. xxv. 14; xxi. 33, 37. John xv. 15; viii. 35. Luke xv. 15, 17. John viii. 34; xiv. 2. Luke viii. 52. John xi. 11. Matt. xviii. 3. John iii. 3; xiii. 33.

† "An exquisite feeling for nature supplied to Him each moment some expressive images" (Renan, 94).

‡ "The genuinely human essence of His nature, which brought with it no sort of prerogative of Divine omniscience on earth, appears nowhere more plainly than in this entire openness of soul for all shapes the world can show, His feeling for Nature, and for man. . . . The man betrays far more of what his eye and ear had gleaned in the age of boyhood and of youth; who can even think of doubting the forwardness of these tendencies, or what man would be likely to become such a friend of Nature as He was, only in the days of His riper age?" (Keim, ii. pp. 168—9.) The whole passage

Now the youth of Jesus ripened in that sweet valley, among gentle hills, which Jerome compares to a just-unfolding rose, and there the flowers are brighter and more abundant, and the birds more numerous and lovely than anywhere else in Palestine. And His thoughts all through life were most frequently clothed in just those symbols with which He became acquainted there.

Stanley remarks that "the mountain, the forest, the striking points of Oriental vegetation, palm, cedar, and terebinth, the images which fill the pages of the psalmists and prophets of the older dispensation, have no place in the Gospel discourses."*

And it well befits a character of perfect equipoise, that what dazzles, what is sensational, should not displace what is quiet and unobtrusive, that He should chiefly illustrate the way of God with souls from the undisturbed and regular course of God's world about us.

is extremely beautiful, but the author has not observed how remarkably this feeling for Nature blends with and authenticates much that he denies.

* *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 432.

Once He mentions the roar of the Mediterranean sea,* once the surge of inundation against a dwelling, once the lightning-flash—and even then, with easy and admirable originality, it is not of the sudden grandeur that He speaks, but of the broad and simultaneous glare from the east even unto the west.†

But His familiar illustrations are morning and night, the grass which to-day is, the various fate of seeds sown broadcast, the various fruits of vines and thorns and figs and thistles, the meaning of red mornings and lowering sunsets, of gorgeous lily and untoiling bird and impartial sun and shower.‡ Reared in a soft and genial atmosphere, sheltered from Nature's ruggedness, her pride and her monotony, He was, as we are told that all the wise are, true to the kindred points of heaven and home.

* Compare for subtle metaphysical connection of ideas, "men's hearts failing them for fear, the sea and the waves roaring," with Mr. Tennyson's

"I dare not die and come to thee, Oriana,
I hear the roaring of the sea, Oriana."

† Luke xxi. 25; xvii. 24. Matt. vii. 25, 27.

‡ Mark xiii. 35. Matt. vi. 30; xiii. 4—8; vii. 16; xvi. 3; vi. 26, 28; v. 45.

Now all this is equally true of the synoptics and of John. In the early Gospels a sower goes forth to sow ; in John the fields are white to harvest, and they who sow and they who reap rejoice together. In Mark the grain of mustard-seed becomes a tree ; in John the corn of wheat which dies brings forth much fruit. In Matthew He will divide the nations as a shepherd divides his sheep ; in Luke He brings home the lost sheep on His shoulders ; and in John He is the Good Shepherd, and the sheep hear His voice and follow Him. In Matthew the plant which His Father hath not planted shall be rooted up, and in Luke the fig-tree must either be cut down or else dug about and tended ; in John the branch which beareth no fruit is taken away, and the branch which beareth fruit is purged that it may bring forth more fruit.*

And those illustrations which we owe to John alone are plainly the utterances of the

* Matt. xiii. 4. Mark iv. 26. Matt. xxv. 32. Luke xv. 4. Matt. xv. 13. Luke xiii. 8. John iv. 35, 36 ; xii. 24 ; x. 2—16 ; xv. 2.

same mind. The water which cools the body suggests to Him that living water, that fountain within the soul, which quenches all thirst. The branches of the vine are entirely dependent upon Himself, the stem. The mysterious movements of the wind, heard but not comprehended, are like the man born of the Spirit, who is, therefore, not indeed lawless, but obedient to finer and more subtle laws, which a natural man cannot understand, even when their effects are palpable.*

And His love of Nature was not merely as of a storehouse of illustrations. The scenes around spoke to Him, and He heard.

In the early Gospels He delighted to worship on the hillside and beneath the stars. In John, when they would have made Him a king, He departed into a mountain again Himself alone, and lingered† until the storm overtook His disciples upon the lake. When He was on the boat and the people on the strand, between

* John iv. 10; xv. 4; iii. 8.

† This is implied in the expression "it was now dark, and Jesus was not come unto them."

the meadows and the waves, the synoptics make His thoughts turn upon harvest and soil, and fish and nets; and John likewise represents Him as telling a nocturnal visitor of those who love the darkness, and speaking with the woman who came to draw water from a sacred well, of a deeper thirst, and a more blessed satisfaction. And they all agree that in the gloom of imminent betrayal He sought for the cool air of midnight, and the mystic shadows of the olive boughs, over which was glowing the golden light of the full moon of Passover.*

Now advance one step farther. Let this vividness of conception, to which the most spiritual thought is not airy and indefinite, but solid, palpable, sharer in the same reality with food and trees and mountains†—let this graphic power come to a climax, and straight-way metaphor itself will not suffice, but symbols, pictorial actions, will be called for.

* Mark i. 35; vi. 46. Luke vi. 12; ix. 28. Matt. xiii. 3, 24, 31. 47. John vi. 15; iii. 19; iv. 10; xviii. 1, 2.

† "Jesus is at once very idealistic in His thoughts, and very materialistic in the expression" (Renan, p. 316).

He who says, Become children, will soon take a child and set him in the midst. The teacher in parables will finally dramatise the mysteries of the soul in sacraments. Now instead of objecting that John is silent about the Christian sacraments, infidelity has yet to explain the startling fact that John actually shows us both sacraments in the process of being shaped, gives us the very ideas in figures which presently flashed out into those symbols, when Nicodemus must be born of water, and when the Jews must eat His flesh and drink His blood.*

Nor is the directly symbolic method wanting.†

* Matt. xviii. 3. Mark ix. 36. John iii. 5; vi. 53.

† If this fact be once admitted (and it cannot be seriously denied), what becomes of the endeavour (so ingeniously elaborated by Keim in particular, iii. 160, *et seq.*) to derive certain of the miraculous stories from metaphorical expressions of our Lord? It is urged that because Jesus promised to make Peter a fisher of men, and spoke of Judaism as a barren fig-tree, therefore stories were circulated of a miraculous draught of fish, and of a tree miraculously blasted. But when it becomes evident that Jesus did, in fact, use actions to express His ideas more vividly than words could do, it is highly characteristic of Jesus that He should use miraculous actions to express the ideas for which He had already found (in words) the same pictorial drapery. The tendency authenticates the miracles.

He washes the disciples' feet with water, and teaches that if He wash them not they have no part in Him. He asserts plainly the symbolic meaning of His feeding the hungry, opening blind eyes, and raising the dead. And He breathes on the disciples that they may receive the Holy Ghost.*

And the fact that John shows us not the sacrament, but the symbol moving toward the sacrament, contrasts remarkably with the assertion of Strauss that his narratives "stand in the same relation of degree to those of the synoptics, as the superlative does to the positive and comparative"†—that, in fact, he exaggerates everything.

Mr. Gregg, in his "Creed of Christendom," relies upon one argument, often urged before and since, as enough to disprove St. John's Gospel.

"The public discourses of Jesus in this Gospel turn almost exclusively upon the dignity of His own person . . . in the first three Gospels we

* John xiii. 8; vi. 50; ix. 39; xi. 25; xx. 22.

† *New Life*, ii. 4.

have the message, in the fourth we have nothing but the Messenger," and therefore, we "cannot here be dealing with the genuine language of Jesus" (p. 129).* Now Renan knows at least something about manner and style. And having rejected the discourses of John, as we saw, for want of admirable flashes and the raillery of a man of the world, he thus reports upon the tone of our Lord's remaining utterances. "He preached not His opinions: He preached Himself. Souls very great and very disinterested often show, linked with much elevation, that perpetual attention to themselves and extreme personal susceptibility, which in general belongs to women. Their persuasion that God is within them, and is continually occupied with them, is so strong that they have no dislike to impose themselves on others. . . This exaltation of self is not egotism . . it is identification

* With Strauss also it is a complaint that "His speeches (in John) turn almost exclusively upon the higher dignity of His own person (i. 116), and even Keim argues against the interview with Nicodemus, because "Jesus never gave prominence to the doctrine of His person, and never gave Himself out to be one who came directly from heaven" (iii. 27).

of one's self with the object of one's devotion, carried to the utmost limit."*

Thus Mr. Gregg rejects the fourth Gospel for making Jesus give us not the message but the Messenger, while M. Renan discovers, elsewhere, and without help from John, that Jesus preached not His opinions but Himself, and identified Himself with the object of His devotion to the extremest limit.†

* Pages 79, 80. The remainder of this paragraph is in hopeless contradiction with another passage in Renan. He continues, "It is arrogance for such as behold in the new appearance only the personal caprice of the founder; it is the finger of God for those who see the issue. Here the idiot stands beside the inspired man, only that the fool achieves nothing, *it has never been given to mental alienation (égarement d'esprit) to do real work for the march of humanity*" (p. 80). Yet hear him again: "*Divine power of love! sacred moments when the passion of a crazed woman (d'une hallucinée) gave to the world a resuscitated God!*" (p. 450.)

† Mr. F. W. Newman also writes: "This element in His character *the preaching of Himself* . . . distinctly exists in Matthew. . . I find *Jesus Himself* to set up oracular claims. I find an assumption of pre-eminence and unapproachable moral wisdom to pervade every discourse from beginning to end of the Gospels. . . If I cut out from the four Gospels this peculiarity, I must cut out nearly every moral discourse and every controversy" (*Phases of Faith*, pp. 149, 150). The whole of the painful seventh chapter of this work is, in my judgment, quite unanswerable. It proposes to prove that when the supernatural Person is denied, the supernatural morality must also be surrendered. And it does prove this. The choice lies between two alternatives. Cease to revere Jesus, or consent to adore Christ.

Or listen to Schenkel's confession.* "The *fourth* Gospel is a really *historical* source for a representation of the character of Christ, but in a *higher, spiritualised* sense of the word. Without this Gospel the unfathomable depth, the inaccessible height of the character of the Saviour of the world would be wanting to us, and His boundless influence, renewing all humanity, would for ever remain a mystery. In the separate stages of His development, Jesus Christ was not what the fourth Gospel paints Him, but He was that *in the height and depth of his influence*; He was not always that actually, but He was that essentially. Our portraiture of Him must not forsake the natural earthly foundation of the first three Gospels, if it is to be historically real; but the representation of the character of Jesus becomes essentially true only in the heavenly splendour of that light which streams forth from the fourth Gospel."

Here is wisdom. Three writers endeavour to portray Jesus as He lived. A fourth pleases

* Pages 34, 35. The italics are not ours, in this quotation or in the last.

himself; usurping, however, the sanction of an apostolic name. He utterly ignores the true development of the Master's consciousness, throws quantities of matter overboard as "unsuitable to his own prepossessions," invents new speeches, adds omniscience and omnipotence to the endowments of a human being, and produces what you might expect—a canvas "essentially differently coloured." But these heroic methods have not spoiled everything, as one would think likely; quite the contrary. "Our portraiture" must abjure him, "if it is to be historically real;" but yet he is "a really historical source;" in fact we shall find nowhere else the way to be "eternally true;" and he enables us for the first time to comprehend either the work or the character of Jesus. To convert a remarkable man into God Almighty is, it appears, the only way to show us what He was "essentially," and "historical reality" is a capital antithesis to array against "eternal truth."*

* With this may be compared the contention of Protagoras, that "opposite assertions are equally true."

Truly it is absurd enough. Yet this passage, and hundreds like it, move in the Christian heart thoughts which lie too deep for laughter, and almost too deep for tears.

This eagerness to concede everything, provided it shall mean nothing, and to affirm that the Divine Christ is true if He may but remain unreal, you think it is only the proffer of easy terms to buy a prompt surrender, the prudence of a conquering logic, which would build a bridge, gilded if not golden, for a flying foe, for a Church which will in turn surrender everything, if only its self-respect be spared?

Its meaning is far other than this.

When, weary of question and of perplexity, one cuts the cable and drifts away from land, doubt and questioning are not really left behind; new problems for ever vex the wanderer, until he strives to appease the contest between belief and unbelief by stretching a hand to each, and fancying that one may be real and yet the other may be true.

Moreover, when the affrighted heart resents the ravage of an all-desolating intellect, when

something within us, too deep for the wisest, the nearest, or the dearest to comprehend, cries out into the starless night, and trembles while it waits for a response—is it a dream then, that

“Through the thunder comes a human voice
Saying, ‘O heart I made, a heart beats here!’”

Is it only a dream that

“The All-wise is the All-loving too?”

“Yes,” answers the negative criticism, “that is but a dream.” But feeling its own heart madden in the hollow places which used to be filled full with the Divinity of Christ, it falters, it stammers, it offers this astonishing concession, that the historical falsehood may yet be the eternal truth.

Behold the suicide of the destructive logic at the moment of its boasted triumph! and marking the contrast, bow down before the peerless veracity of Him, the King of Truth, who said of the last refuge of the wretched, and the only hope of the desperate, that if it were delusive, He would not have duped us with rounded phrases, nor lulled us to sleep

in a paradise of fools, but would have torn down the fairest veil which hid the worst reality from our unhappy vision. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you."

IV.

“When we consider the way in which Christianity grew up, it is plain that it could have had no place nor significance in history but for the Person of its Founder.

“How soon must all the true and weighty precepts of Christianity have been numbered with the faint echoes of words spoken by many a friend of humanity and philanthropic sage of ancient times, had not its doctrines been made words of eternal life *in the mouth of its Founder!*

“But we cannot help asking, with regard to the Person of Jesus, what is to be considered as the secret of the importance it has attained for the whole of the world’s history.”—F. C. Baur, *Church History*, i. 38.

“NO MAN PUTTETH A PIECE OF NEW CLOTH UPON AN OLD GARMENT, FOR THAT WHICH IS PUT IN TO FILL IT UP TAKETH FROM THE GARMENT, AND THE RENT IS MADE WORSE.”—*Matt.* ix. 16.

It is confessed that the story of Christ contains more virtues, and more exalted ones, than any other story in the world.

The previous Lectures have not striven to prove this, which no person denies. His simplicity, lowliness, unselfish love to man, obedience to the Divine Father, His passive graces and energies in action, are no longer celebrated in the Church alone; they are the common theme of all exalted souls; and for this the Church gives Him thanks, as for the visible beginning of the restitution of all things.

But we have been concerned to prove that the same person, with strong marks of character, who is seen and confessed in the natural portions of the story, is visible in the rejected supernatural portions, and you can no more doubt His identity than that of a character in Shakspeare.

We now advance a step further, and assert that only the supernatural portions explain or justify the others. The whole history assumes and demands that the personality is miraculous and unique.

It is a blessed thing, for His sake, to be reviled, slandered, persecuted. For His sake, men are to stand before kings; for His sake, to be hated of all men; and the reason why they should not complain is that He also suffered who is Master and Lord, and that He will confess them before His Father. For His sake men ought to hate father and mother, and their own lives also.

In the last day He shall judge even those who called Him Lord, Lord, and prophesied in His name, and in His name cast out devils, and His curse upon the reprobate shall be, "Depart from Me." Is not this He whom John remembers to have said, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son?" *

* Matt. v. 11; x. 18, 22, 25, 32. Luke xiv. 26. Matt. vii. 22, 23. John v. 22.

Because David in spirit calleth Him Lord, He insists that He must be more than David's son.*

* Matt. xxii. 45. This passage is well discussed by Keim, who shows, from a "liberal" point of view, that it does not deny the descent of Jesus from David. "His claim to be not only David's Son, but his Lord, is by no means a denial of Davidic origin; it is at most a designation of this as the least part of His greatness." The whole argument is worth reading (*Jesus of Nazara*, ii. 25—28).

The grounds upon which scepticism usually maintains the contrary opinion are, indeed, fatal to the sceptical position, and the passage would scarcely have been admitted to be genuine at all if it had not seemed to press heavily against the pedigrees. Schenkel states the case as follows:—"He showed that the hope of a Messiah descending from David was visionary. This truth He set forth from Psalm cx. . . . If David considered the Messiah as *his* Lord, it is manifest that he could not have expected Him to arise among his sons or posterity. That the father should call his 'son' his Lord, is altogether repugnant to the consideration paid in the Old Testament to the feeling of reverence. The father David continued to be always greater and more glorious than any son of his. Hence Jesus rejected the popular opinion that the Messiah must be a descendant of David" (pp. 243, 244). (Cf. Strauss, i. 304, &c. &c.)

If *this* was the argument of Jesus, we have the highest claim of the fourth Gospel outshone in the other three. The same reason which forbade Messiah to be the Son of David, because "the father continued to be always greater and more glorious than any son of his," would much more forbid Jesus to be the Son of any subject of David. He cannot, therefore, have had any mortal parents, and thus we have not only His super-human origin intimated, but His human origin entirely denied, by the explanation which liberal criticism thinks it wise to force upon us.

Nothing in John is stronger than the words "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." *

If all the weary and heavy laden will accept Christ's yoke, the burdens of all the world will become light.†

The Son of Man sows good seed over the whole world as over "His field," and the angels are His own whom He sends at harvest-time to rid "His kingdom" of the tares.

To know that He is the Son of God is a special blessedness, and not a discovery, but a

* Nothing in Strauss is more hollow than his embarrassed and hesitating conclusion that "this speech, which stands quite isolated in the first and third Gospels, refers us to a principle resembling that of the fourth Gospel, and appears consequently (!) to be an addition" (*New Life*, i. 276). Thus while John's doctrine is rejected for being inconsistent with the synoptics, the witness of two synoptics is rejected for being consistent with the doctrine of John. By such methods, a weaker logician than Strauss could prove anything.

† Matt. xi. 27, 28. "To doubt the genuineness of this wonderful passage (the 28th verse) is rank treason" (Keim, ii. 187). He rightly calls attention, in connection with it, to Christ's "actual power of attraction."

supreme revelation, which shall be rewarded with the keys of the kingdom of heaven.* We are told by unbelievers that "Jesus looked upon His relation to God in the light of a son's to a father. But in the first three Gospels this view rests upon a broad rational foundation. Men who imitate God in His moral perfections, especially His benevolence, . . . are called Sons of God."†

But the phenomenon which has to be explained is stranger on this account. Long after Jesus proclaimed the common sonship of mankind, and the special sonship of those who were "the children of their Father," He is declared to have treated His own Sonship as a mystery so profound that flesh and blood could not reveal it. Renan frankly confesses that He claimed in this title "a connection (*un rapport*) with God more exalted than that of other men" and even "a power without limits."‡

If the prayers of two or three shall be

* Matt. xi. 28; xiii. 24, 38, 41; xvi. 17.

† Strauss, *New Life*, i. 274.

‡ Pages 255, 256.

done for them of the Father, this is because Christ Himself can be among them wherever they assemble in His name.

When servant after servant has been assaulted, and even murdered, hope remains that even yet there may be reverence for the Son.*

Rationalism has often been challenged to explain that prophecy wherein the Son of Man, coming in His own glory, and with all the holy angels, who are His, sits upon the throne of His glory, and is called not only the King's Son, but Himself the very King, and decides the destinies of mankind.†

But this challenge does not exhaust the significance of the passage. Why does He reward those who feed the hungry, lodge the homeless, clothe the naked, and visit the captive and the sick?

Not for their Enthusiasm of Humanity, not because a man should count nothing human to be alien from himself, but because a mystic preciousness is attached for His sake to the

* Matt, xviii. 19, 20; xii. 6, 7.

† Matt. xxv. 31—46.

humblest of His brethren, because "Ye did it unto Me."

Nor is this all. This passage resembles another in St. John in a method of treating the Old Testament which is really the simplest and quietest assumption of Divine rank that could possibly be devised. Neither passage is at the trouble to assert what it implies. Each takes the matter for granted with all the ease of an accustomed and habitual thing, wearing the weight of deity lightly, like a flower. You remember that Christ in St. John takes possession of the sheep, and explains His devotion to them by the fact that they are His, that He is not an hireling. And you cannot have failed to connect this utterance with Ezekiel's prophecy, where it is "the Lord God" who complains that "My shepherds searched not for My flock," and adds, "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I, even I, will both search My sheep and seek them out." *

When the Jesus of St. John thus contrasts

* John x. 11, 12; Ezek. xxxiv. 8, 11.

Himself with the hireling, and declares that the sheep are His own, this bold appropriation of the place and office of God coincides exactly with the prophecy of Matthew, which we are now considering. For whereas Ezekiel makes Jehovah say, "I, even I, judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he-goats" (ver. 17), Christ here declares that it is He who shall separate all nations as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats.

In like manner, whereas God says in Malachi, "Behold I send My messenger before My face," Jesus applies the passage to a messenger sent before Himself.*

Now who can doubt that this Jesus is the God-man of the fourth Gospel?

We are not now arguing, you will observe, that because Jesus in all these sayings advanced astonishing claims, therefore these claims must be admitted. We are not even urging that He was too sane to be deluded, and too pure to delude others.

We are simply pursuing our study of a

* Mal. iii. 1; Matt. xi. 10.

character, already shown to be as vivid and coherent as if Shakspeare had conceived it, instead of four uninstructed Galileans, of whom three at least can pretend to no special genius whatever, while the parts of the fourth which are most remarkable are just what the sceptic throws away as "poor stuff."* We are examining a problem, a mystery, a symmetrical and exquisite conception, which certainly exists, although you know not whence nor how it comes until you enter the Church of Christ. In this conception we have already shown that the power of working miracles is inherent. We are urging that in it, as a conception, a preternatural and even Divine personality is also inherent and ineradicable. You explain nothing unless you explain this. You are not free to sever those portions which are simple and human from the rest, and to say that these are genuine and the rest are a fiction or a dream. It is a case for dealing with all or nothing.

For we remark, in addition, that this divine claim affects the portions which are simple

* J. S. Mill, *Essays on Religion*, p. 254.

and human equally with the portions in which it is most conspicuous.

The evidence is negative as well as positive ; it is as striking in what He always avoids as in anything He ever says or does.

For Himself He assumes Lordship, but He never calls God His Lord. No other sonship is ever joined with His in the common phrase, "Our Father ;" at the most it is "My Father and your Father" (guarded moreover by a significant variation in the Greek article), while others, even alone and when the door is shut, may claim no selfish title, but must always say, "Our Father," and never, as He said, "Mine." He sings with them, but never prays with them ; blesses bread with them, but never joins in asking for any blessing ; when they see Him pray, so far from being called to join, they need presently to ask to be taught to pray. And in His darkest hour, when those conflicting impulses of mental anguish, the need of sympathy and the desire of solitude, are shown to us contending in Him, so that all are led into the garden, and the chosen ones are

brought still nearer, and yet He must withdraw Himself, even from these, a little space, even then, although He says, "Pray, lest ye enter into temptation," although He says, "Watch and pray," although He says, "Could ye not watch with Me one hour?"—He says not, "Pray with Me." *

Observe how St. Paul implores his churches to help him with their prayers, and mark how deep the chasm between the two. Why then does it never occur to any one that Paul thought more of human prayers than Jesus thought, except that every one, however unconsciously, is sensible of the higher plane of existence on which Jesus moves, and perceives the Divine flame, around which the pure lamp of His humanity is translucent and almost transparent?

Except Jesus, the holiest have been always the readiest to confess their sinfulness, nor has any religious movement succeeded, other than His, of which the leader had not suffered, at some time, agonies of spiritual pain.

* Luke vi. 46. John xx. 17. Matt. vi. 6, 9. Luke xi. 1. Matt. xxvi. 36—41.

Mahomed in the Koran repeatedly confesses his sins. The tree is still exhibited beneath whose leaves the anguish of the Buddha was appeased.*

Even our duty of imitating Christ has never led any man to deny his own corruptions; the reproductive power of His holiness pauses here, and they who have most closely followed Him confess the difference most readily.

Christ says, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" But the "Imitation of Christ" says, "What right have I, so vile a wretch, to complain unto my God, if He withdraw His presence and leave me to myself?" (xlv.).

Bunyan and Kempis, Luther and Augustine, Peter and John would have readily adopted the confession of David that he was shapen in sin, and the wail of Isaiah for the uncleanness of his lips. The sceptic is right who insists that "the best and purest of mankind has ever many sins to accuse himself of,"† but what shall we say when he admits presently that Jesus pro-

* The references are given in the next lecture.

† Strauss, *New Life*, i. 264.

bably thought of the "surrendering of His life as 'a ransom for many,' and of His death as an atoning sacrifice. For these ideas in their general form approached very nearly to the Jewish range of thought?"*

Yes, the idea of sacrifice was Jewish, but the lamb should be without spot. No sinner ever dreamed of redeeming other lives with his own, which was already forfeited. And when the evidence began to show this unbeliever that Jesus assumed such an attitude toward the law, then his contention that Jesus felt any stain upon His conscience was shaken to the foundation-stone.

He argues indeed that Christ submitted to a baptism of repentance, and expunges the declaration that this was to fulfil all righteousness.†

* Strauss, *New Life*, i. 319. Yet he speaks elsewhere of Christ's "displeasure at the gross materialism of the sacrificial system," and says that He "seems to have taken up a position towards the whole of the Jewish Temple service, not quite so harmless as appears in our Gospels" (i. 292). How then could that system have misled His doctrine concerning Himself? Renan also confesses that "death appeared to Him as a sacrifice destined to appease His Father and to save mankind" (p. 329).

† i. 264. Contrast the position assumed and made good by Keim, ii. 274—6.

He quotes the question, "Why callest thou Me good?" as if Christ, while considering Himself a worthy ransom for souls, was yet confessing His own badness rather than meeting the flip-pant title of Good Master with an assertion that He must either be less, or else be far more than this.

But the famous author of this argument has abundantly refuted himself. He has owned that "as an individual becomes morally purified, the moral feeling itself is more acutely sensitive to the slightest impurity of moral motive, the slightest deviation from the ideal."* Christ, therefore, if He had ever sinned, would be the most acutely pained of all. Yet he confesses that "Jesus appears before us as a beautiful nature from the first, which had only to develop itself out of itself, to become more deeply conscious of itself, ever firmer in itself, but not to change."† And he even tells us that struggle and mental anguish could not have preceded the adult period of which we read in the Gospels without throwing upon His later life a dark

* Strauss, *New Life*, i. 264.

† *Ibid.* i. 232-3.

shadow, which we know from the history was not there.*

The personal attitude of Jesus towards sin is indeed a problem which unbelief can never solve.

To make Him sinless is to make Him supernatural, for perfect innocence is quite as contrary to experience as any physical marvel could be.

To pretend that sin troubled Him slightly is impossible, for a nature like His would suffer agonies from the least taint or stain.

Yet to suppose that His conscience was burdened, much less tormented, is to lose all influence over every man who is competent to judge between guilt and goodness. He is felt to be, in the noble phrase of Keim, at once "sinless in the present and painless as regards the past."

* "One might suppose that the period of cheerful unity with Himself might have been preceded by another of gloomy struggles and numerous deviations from the right way. But, unless all analogies deceive us, traces of this must have been discoverable in His later life, respecting which we are not without information" (i. 282). Thus we learn to trust our Gospels, not only for the periods which they cover, but for inferences which reach back to the beginning.

In this extremity, Renan puts forward views which strike each other in the face. His patronising arguments that Jesus was not far wrong in conniving at falsehood and imposture are notorious,* his apology being that Jesus

* "To conceive what is good will not suffice; it is necessary to make it succeed among men; for this, ways are needed that are not over-pure. If the Gospel consisted only of some chapters of Matthew and Luke, it would be more perfect and less assailable; but would it have converted the world without miracles? If Jesus had died at the point we have now reached in His career, the page would have been wanting from His life which hurts us; but, far more grand in the sight of God, He would have been unknown to men. . . . The truth would not have been propagated, and the world would have gained nothing by the immense moral superiority with which His Father endowed Him. . . . In morality, as in art, to say is nothing, to perform is all. . . . Some extremely virtuous people have done nothing to keep the tradition of virtue alive in the world. The palm is for Him who has been strong both in words and deeds" (pp. 96—7).

"He who takes humanity with its illusions, and seeks to act upon it and with it is not to be blamed. . . . It is easy for us, impotent as we are, to call this falsehood, and boastful of our timid honesty, to deal harshly with the heroes who have accepted, in other conditions, the struggle of their life. When we have achieved with our scruples what they have achieved with their falsehoods, we shall have some right to be severe on them. . . . The only culprit in such a case is the humanity which wills to be deceived" (p. 264).

M. Renan, one thinks, may be much at ease about his "scruples." But how much nobler is the assertion of Strauss that "with a personality of such immeasurable historical effect as that of Jesus obviously was, there cannot be a question of adaptation, of playing a part." And again he says, of "disguising the fact or imposing on His hearers," that "we have as little right to impute to Jesus the one as the other" (*New Life*, i. 312; ii. 176).

had no other resource against the practical difficulties of His path. Yet we read again of convictions and beliefs which are highly inconsistent with that sense of weakness which beguiles men into fraud. If Jesus saw no visions, this was because "God speaks not with Him as with one outside Himself. God is in Him, He feels Himself with God, and He draws from His own heart all that He says of His Father. He lived in the breast of God by a communication from moment to moment." "He believed Himself to be in direct communication with God, to be the Son of God,"* and Renan declares of Him that "whatever unlooked-for phenomena may be yet to come, Jesus shall never be surpassed. His worship shall renew itself without ceasing; His story shall evoke tears without end; His sufferings shall soften the best hearts; all the ages shall proclaim that among the

* Page 78. Strange language this, however, for one who has elsewhere spoken of "our Father the abyss." It is hard, remembering the avowed pantheism of M. Renan and his anxiety to "organise God," to know what all the above fine writing really means to tell.

sons of men none has been more great than Jesus.”*

Not so, if it be true that having “to choose between renouncing His mission and becoming a dealer in marvels,” He “was made a dealer in marvels slowly and against His will,” and that “He made no great resistance, although He did little to help the notion, and at all events he perceived the vanity of the opinion.”† Not so. Despite the “infinite charm” and “exquisite person” of this “superior man,”‡ the world, sick at heart, would turn from the glittering impostor, with its bitter wail, so familiar to us all, unstilled—

“O God, for a man with heart, head, hand,
Like some of the simple great ones, gone
For ever and ever by—
*One still strong man in a blatant land
Who can rule, and dares not lie.*”

It well repays the student of unbelieving theories of Christ, to observe their manner of dealing with the awful story of His crucifixion. Men are seen in the truest light amid injustice and anguish and the shadows of death: false

* Page 475. † Pages 267, 275, 276. ‡ Pages 169, 270.

notions of their character are then exposed, and sound ones are verified most certainly.

Now a theory must not only suit the facts where these are least remarkable: it must solve their more complex problems, keep time with their mightier movements, explain their vaster agitations. And the most complex and awful phenomenon in the story of Christ is what unbelief calls the final one—it is the story of His crucifixion. The facts may be denied, but the story at least exists, and must be grappled with. There is, beyond doubt, a conception of utter physical weakness, of hands that work no miracle, and a head which bows in death, combined with prodigious moral energy, with suavity and love and regenerating power without a parallel.

Before that sublime and dreadful spectacle, ages have stood at gaze. Napoleon Bonaparte accepts the verdict of Rousseau that it is “the death of a God.” The Church which adores Him is not ashamed of His cross, is never weary of proclaiming that “for her life He died.” One shrinks from examining and

testing the last words of Jesus, those wonderful utterances of mortal anguish and immortal majesty; you have revered them since your infancy, and we would fain content ourselves with asking whether, in your loftiest worship of Eternal God, your most soaring thought of His perfections rises above these sacred and sorrowful words, even for an hour.

But we are forbidden to be content. Infidelity has felt, it would seem, that even in the absence of any positive miracle performed by the sufferer, the whole scene is charged with the miraculous, like an atmosphere densely electrical, that every word is in a high sense supernatural, and it has wisely undertaken to explain them all, by explaining them away. We are forced to ask how has infidelity succeeded; for if it can do this, it can perhaps do anything; but if it fails here, our challenge is still unmet, to explain the story of Jesus upon rationalistic principles.

Consider the perfect sweetness and transcendent majesty of those seven astonishing words, the prayer that His murderers might be

forgiven their crime, which was yet too overwhelming for anything but their ignorance to palliate; the tender care for His mother, blended with a consciousness that their earthly relations were at an end; His boldness, when His sacred bearing, and perhaps the dread shadows of eclipse, overcame His fellow-sufferer's obduracy, to grant him paradise, and to stake that immortal hope on His own word, even while His very life is ebbing fast away;* consider that great saying (impossible to fabricate) which owned Himself forsaken of God, and yet denied the existence of any guilty reason, and with astonishing faith claimed as still His the God whose desertion He deplored;† and when the

* The penitence of the thief is here put later than Christ's provision for His mother; because the words spoken to Mary and John would naturally have contributed to win the sufferer; because his change of feeling would have only completed itself gradually, while there is no reason for supposing that our Lord delayed His loving care; and because "Jesus saw His mother and the disciple," while some share in the universal panic which seems to have been produced by the sudden darkness would probably have helped the penitent to "fear God." There is only inference to go upon, but I find no counterbalancing arguments on the other side. The order of the other words is perhaps certain.

† Here, at least, Schenkel has done well. He writes that Christ "was conscious of most intimate communion with God, but His *position* was so unutterably miserable that it seemed to Him as if

horror of darkness passed in reply to this appeal (for it was spoken about the ninth hour) then the gentle readiness to re-establish ties of human sympathy and help between Himself and that awestruck crowd, which lately mocked Him, which our vulgar heroisms would surely have defied, but to which Jesus said, "I thirst,"* now at last remembering His physical anguish when the burden upon His spirit was removed; and then, when the King of Terrors is at hand, in the moment which our poet calls "the last and the worst," the serene knowledge that "it is finished;" and then the committal of His spotless spirit into the hand of Him who is now again called "Father"—and say whether all this is not beyond the power of invention or development, of legend or myth.

God had forsaken Him. Therefore His cry of distress is not 'O God, why have I forsaken Thee,' but 'My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'" (p. 306). He has, however, in a very arbitrary manner displaced this utterance so as to obscure the fact that they were followed by words of perfect calmness. In this respect Philochristus follows him. But the method of Philochristus evades many difficulties which would not have easily been overcome.

* Why has Dr. Geikie in his *Life and Words* (first edition) entirely omitted this saying? Lange's *Life of Christ* contains a sublime passage upon it.

These are the words for which unbelief is bound to provide some adequate explanation. What kind of explanation is offered to us?

We read that the two thieves who suffered with Him are suggested by the prediction that He should be numbered with the transgressors, and that Luke converted one of them because this insult done to Jesus needed reversal, because Jesus was a friend of sinners, because He had once talked about a repentant prodigal, because the contrast between the two malefactors is picturesque, and perhaps it would typify the contrast between repentant heathenism and the stubborn hardness of the Jews. The object of introducing the 22nd Psalm is to draw attention to its supposed fulfilment, but Luke avoided the quotation, because he disliked the notion that God forsook His Son.*

* What is surely curious, Luke "heightened the description of the Agony in Gethsemane," we are informed, in order that all might now be "calmness and elevation" (Strauss, *New Life*, ii. 377).

This reason, for which Strauss charges Luke with heightening the Agony, is the very same for which Schenkel charges Luke with enfeebling it. He writes: "'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even

The prediction that some one should bear the sins of many, led to the assertion that Jesus prayed for His murderers and forgave the thief. The words "I thirst" were merely an artifice to fulfil a prediction. As if any mythologist could make his Messiah cajole and circumvent prophecy after this fashion, and as if the cunning forger of the fourth Gospel, who had just rejected the Agony as unworthy of his Logos, would have submitted to a detail so humbling! The commending of His spirit to God is rejected for being a quotation, as if we ourselves never heard a dying man utter his deepest feeling in the words he had long felt to be most sacred.

You remember how coldly Socrates, when his wife laments him, says, "Crito, let some one take her away home;" and as she is led

unto death.' The third Evangelist . . . finds offence in these words and suppresses them. Even to him such agony of soul seems irreconcilable with the exalted calmness and serenity which Jesus had just before shown when instituting the Lord's Supper" (p. 282). Such are the tactics of Rationalism. Strauss declares unreservedly that Luke exaggerates the Agony, Schenkel that he reduces it; whereupon Strauss discovers that his object is to produce a contrast, Schenkel that he is scheming to avoid one.

out screaming, he rubs his leg, and begins to be wise about the strange thing called pleasure.* Contrast with such philosophic sternness, that most pathetic remembrance of His mother by our Lord amid His pangs, over which countless children, countless mothers have been moved to the purest tears, and believe it, if you will, to be a “cunningly laid plan” for putting St. John above St. Peter’s head. Besides which, it is rejected as a plagiarism, for He had once already declared that His disciples were His mother and His brethren; but now, as the sceptic complains, the honour of being Christ’s brother is monopolised by one.†

Thus you have all that wonderful story beautifully cleared up. Thus, too, you may explain the “Laocoön,” sublime in anguish, by observing that some marble has been chipped with a chisel and filed smooth; or the “Ecce Homo,” by remarking that some colours have been spread

* Phædo, 60.

† See, for all the above, Strauss, *New Life*, ii. 375—381. See also Baur, Volkmar, &c.

on canvas. Alas ! one thinks, something yet remains to be explained, even the one thing worth explaining, the harmony and grandeur, the awe, the sacredness, the Divinity of the effect. Or if, to change the figure, we granted that the music of the Gospel had indeed been blown through those twisted and ungainly tubes, even then you would not have explained the adoration in the anthem by informing us that the pipes are brass. You would only have distracted attention from the mystery which you could not solve. It is not by jealous rivalry and self-assertion that the noblest and most self-forgetful conceptions are to be accounted for.

Renan is not so bad as Strauss, because he attempts less, and is plainly reluctant to say more than he can avoid. Yet he also declares that the wish to accomplish prophecy, and to edify, makes all these sayings dubious ;* and, more confidently, that Jesus was too full of His work, and of mankind at large, to attend to one weeping woman, whose heart the long-predicted sword was piercing, and who had

* *Vie de Jésus*, note on p. 434.

borne Him.* For the Jesus of M. Renan is much more philanthropic than humane, and in pursuit of His idea he can "trample under foot everything that is of man, blood, love, country." Yet His was an "idyllic and sweet nature" †

This critic, indeed, is of opinion that "the extreme elevation of our Lord's character made so personal a tenderness improbable," which one remark decides the question of his own insight into the mind of Christ. He has already been led by his theories to lay down the proposition that Jesus "was more beloved than loving, and in Him, as often happens in very elevated natures, tenderness of heart transformed itself into infinite sweetness, vague poesy, universal charm." ‡

This undefined perfume of sentimentalism would suit well a Parisian boudoir, but it is not the air of Galilee, and it contrasts pitifully with the love of Jesus for those who had continued with Him in His temptations, with His concern for Peter's approaching fall, with His

* *Vie de Jésus*, p. 436. † Pages 45, 133. ‡ Page 76.

sorrow for the daughters of Jerusalem in His own darkest hour. These reveal no vaporous and "vague poesy," but a heart of practical self-sacrificing love. Nor is the daring assertion that "personal tenderness" in elevated natures evaporates into "charm," more false to the story of Jesus than to that universal human nature of which M. Renan, while he says much, apparently knows little indeed. The emotions are powerful, as gunpowder is, by compression, by directness of object, not by indefinite vagueness, which may produce a Sterne or perhaps a Rousseau, but never a great nature, a Shakspeare or a Dante.

The repentance of the thief is ascribed to Luke's taste for the conversion of sinners,* while Christ's appeal to God showed that His

* No assumption of "criticism" is more common and audacious than that which alleges that if Luke had "a taste for conversions," or Mark for "picturesque details," their evidence is discredited whenever these appear. Such a rule would reject a geologist's evidence about the stratification of a new land, and a botanist's about its flora. In theology it is assumed by the rationalists to be an axiom; but if Christ's nature and career were indeed perfect, it must have been possible for each disciple to discover in His story those qualities which most attracted him.

heart failed Him, and He repented perhaps of suffering for a vile race. Too elevated to pity His mother, He was not too elevated for this ; even as in Gethsemane that "exalted nature, averse from personal tendernesses," had perhaps regretted "the young girls who would probably have consented to love Him." *

Students, seekers of truth, against the instructive baseness of these blind surmises, I appeal to your intellects, I invoke your hearts !

There are times—God knows it and we all know it well—when you are tempted to set against the evidences of Christianity, not this or that counterweight of argument, but the vague uncertainties and possibilities which seem to hang over the dim past, like a mist which may indeed be empty, but may perhaps conceal armies under its veil. You are impelled towards a surrender of your faith by the unknown, which is always a factor in the remote, by "Per-

* *Vie de Jésus*, 437, 391. Renan has the astonishing temerity to explain the Agony by a reference to the sorrowful recoil of a self-sacrificing man, "when the image of death presents itself to him, for the first time" (p. 391).

adventure," and "Who knows?" which are harder than any argument to grapple with. At such times, I beseech you to reflect that "Peradventure" and "Who knows?" have already exhausted their surmises, and to consider how little the all-dissolving acid of German scepticism and the all-poisoning fumes of French sentiment have prevailed against Christ in His weakness, upon His cross.

Is it credible that the same mythological impulse which made clay sparrows fly for Him, invented that sublime prayer, "Father, forgive them?" that His provision for His mother was the ignoble device of a schemer without a name? that He said, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" with a sinking heart, grieving to die for His brethren? If this be incredible, the assaults of infidelity are shattered.

But if the Gospel conception of His life and death be true, then all grows clear in the radiance of that stainless and Divine humanity, which illumined His life and shed a glory upon His death.

And by the uprising of your soul, by the protest of your reason against the heartless analysis which outrages the heart and the brain alike, Christ lifted up draws you, as He draws all men, unto Him.

V.

“Porphyrius took a peculiar critico-eclectic position alike towards Christianity and paganism. While he shared the moral-religious world-view of Christianity in its essentials, there are, so much the more, individual passages of the Scripture against whose traditional explanations—and individual facts, both in Church history and in the ecclesiastical view thereof, against which he bent his attacks, with a view to separate the original truth from the falsehood subsequently added.

“In the doctrines of Christ, at least in His genuine and original preaching, Porphyry denied not that there were elements of truth; yea, he was ready and willing to confess in Jesus Christ a religious genius of the highest kind, a man of supremely excellent wisdom and piety, a revelation of God in earthly life, an *επιδημία* of God among men.

“But only the more he felt himself driven to use a criticism, at times earnest, at other times scornful, not seldom spiteful, against as many things as he thought partly self-contradictory, partly unworthy . . . and to show them up as arbitrary falsehoods or worthless myths.”—Wagenmann on Porphyry, *Tahrbücher für Deutsche Theologie*, pp. 278—9. (1878.)

“PILATE WENT AGAIN INTO THE JUDGMENT-HALL, AND
SAITH UNTO JESUS, WHENCE ART THOU? BUT JESUS GAVE
HIM NO ANSWER.”—*John* xix. 9.

WE have seen how vainly this problem of Pilate is guessed at by the sceptical theories of our time. None of their ingenious questionings can wring His secret from the lips of the Mysterious Being, who stands in silence at the bar of the centuries, until His time arrives to mount the judgment-throne.

It is not so with any mythical or legendary character. Criticism quickly enough plucks out the heart of their mystery, and our argument would be incomplete indeed if it overlooked this contrast between our religion and every other system, and every excrescence upon itself.

When Romanism proclaimed its Immaculate Queen of Heaven, who commands her Son and He obeys, it was self-convicted by the blurring and confusing of the image of that meek woman who rejoiced in God her Saviour, and whose only recorded mandate is that whatsoever Jesus said, men should do it.

About Mahomed our fathers collected a mass of adverse legend, while his followers wove for him a garland of miraculous splendour. Do any of these legends blend into one consistent story with his real life of energy, fanaticism, singleness of aim, duplicity of method, self-indulgence, and devotion? Can you harmonise the silly fable that he trained a dove to feed from his ear, to pretend that the Spirit of God was instructing him, with his actual refusal to work any miracle on the ground that "if a door were opened in heaven above, and men should ascend thereto all day long, they would surely say, 'Our eyes are only dazzled, or rather we are deluded by enchantments' "?* Can you reconcile his frank and repeated confessions of sin† with the fable that in his cradle an angel wrung the black drop from his heart, and left him thenceforth immaculate? or his refusal of miracles with

* Sale, *Koran*, xv. See also xiii., xvii.

† "We have granted thee a great victory, that God may forgive thee thy preceding and thy subsequent sin." "Ask pardon for thy sin, and for the true believers" (Sale, *Koran*, xlviii., xlvii.). Even the legend which these passages refute does not venture to ascribe inherent purity to the Prophet.

the story that trees met him, that stones and beams cried out to him, that poisoned meat warned him of his danger, or that the moon, entering his coat by the collar, split asunder and came out at the sleeves? * These are the genuine achievements of the legendary spirit, long after Christ had been preached, and they do not help the sceptic to explain the harmony which exists between the character and the miracles of Jesus.

Turn to the much more suggestive case of Gautama, the Buddha, † whom it is now so fashionable to compare with our Lord.

Approaching India, we enter the home-land of fable, and we shall frankly own that myth has achieved great and strange things with the Buddha.

It began with the teacher of a wonderfully pure and elevated morality, ‡ and it converted him into a sinless being and a deity in flesh,

* Gibbon, chap. l. Sale's *Koran*, note to chap. liv., &c. &c.

† Gautama is a name, like Jesus. Buddha is a title, like Christ. Sakya-mouni, which means the Hermit of the Tribe of Sakya, is no more correct as a proper name for Gautama, than the Lion of the Tribe of Judah would be as an habitual appellation for our Lord.

‡ "The highest morality that was ever taught before the rise of Christianity" (Max Müller, *Science of Religion*, p. 143).

which facts, nakedly stated, are not unfit to prop the theories of rationalism. But it is far different when we ask how these results have been produced. For it has proved impossible to deify the sage without spoiling his morality, reversing his theology, and outraging the story of his life. There is, indeed, no clearer evidence than the earlier and later accounts of Gautama, that legend floats upon the surface of history like oil upon water, but obstinately refuses to blend with it like wine.

We are touched with a fellow-feeling for the struggles of so fair a soul, amid the gloom of heathenism, when we read of his long conflict with worldliness, of his emotion in the presence of poverty and death, of his lament, when a child is born to him, that here is yet another tie which must be broken, and of his secret abandonment of all he loved because he (like Savonarola) dared not endure the strain of a formal parting. He strives (like Luther) to overcome his passions by austerities which waste him to a shadow; he wanders (like Augustine) to various teachers; and at last he

sees his way, and becomes Buddha, which means the Enlightened One, upon a spot which is still pointed out. This is the story of a man, frail but earnest, striving honestly for truth, and attaining, from the depths of heathenism, to the very ideal of those religious persons among ourselves who ask no more than to find Peace and to be made Happy.

But all this story is at hopeless variance with that mythology which has transformed the pure and gentle Gautama into a prodigy, at whose conception ten thousand worlds are filled with light and hell is quenched, while he enters the side of his mother in the shape of a beautiful white elephant. Before birth, he preaches to the angels who guard him, and on being born he strides forward ten paces, and cries with a lion-voice, "I am Chief of the World, and this is my last birth."* Instead of mental gloom and conflict, we are now told of his game at hide-and-seek with a Nat, whom he detects and drags forth from the centre of the earth in the form of a

* T. W. Davids, *Buddhism*, 183—5.

grain of sand, and upon whose eye-lid he then conceals himself in the shape of an impalpable atom, until it pleases him to step down upon a ladder of gems and gold.* The pensive and melancholy teacher who proposed to exclude women from his societies† is now sculptured as a youth beside a nymph, while a sly monkey listens to their discourse, or as stealing money from an old man's chest while the miser himself approaches with a key.‡ He is a giant of eighteen cubits high, and his footprints are five feet long.§

His real doctrines are as inconsistent with the myths as his real life was. He taught that salvation was from within by self-control. One of his maxims ran, "To cease from sin, to get virtue, to cleanse one's own heart, this is the religion of the Buddha." And when dying he says, "I depart, having relied upon myself alone." The love of life here, and love of a future life, are two among the ten deadly sins of his system, and he proclaims that "the wise

* *Asiatic Researches*, vi. 238. † Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 70.

‡ *Asiatic Researches*, vi. 436. § *Macmillan's Magazine*, i. 447

are extinguished like a lamp." "No being can overcome dissolution, no such condition can exist;" and Mr. Swinburne, of all persons, hit upon the purest Buddhism when he conjectured that "All things and lords of things shall cease."*

"The fact cannot be disputed away," writes Max Müller, "that the religion of Buddha was from the beginning purely atheistic. The idea of the Godhead . . . was, for the time at

* *Poems*, p. 87. Mr. Swinburne as a theologian is indeed a curious study. In one poem he informs us that, although it is uncertain just now whether we shall survive death, yet having died we shall find it all out. "We shall know if the grave-pit be shallow or deep," and several other matters of much interest. Now the teacher who can thus guarantee our future consciousness might safely have relieved his disciples from suspense about our future existence. And the quotation goes to show that extinction is really "unthinkable" (*Poems*, p. 195).

In the prelude to his "Songs before Sunrise," he boasts of having

"Trod to dust
Fear and desire, mistrust and trust,"

and asks (p. 2)—

"What has he whose will sees clear
To do with doubt and faith?"

But this very poem cannot close without singing of "the light of trust" (p. 8)—which he had so recently trod to dust. Nor is the volume finished until he celebrates the "divine face and clear eyes of faith" (p. 126), and declares that he is "girt with

least, entirely expelled from the sanctuary of the human mind."*

Yet all this was reversed within a very little while. The new belief is that when he teaches the hills bow down, and heaven is emptied by the rush of angels to listen. He converts a monster who devoured children, exactly as St.

his belief" (p. 180). Thus we learn that he has something to do with it.

Again, in a passage full of painful interest and suggestion, he tells Christ (p. 100):—

"The tree of faith ingrafted by priests
Puts its foul foliage out above Thee;
And round it feed man-eating beasts,
Because of whom we dare not love Thee."

Who would suspect this humane person of having sung these "man-eating" words—

"I wish you were dead, my dear;
I would give you, had I to give,
Some death too bitter to fear"—*Poems*, p. 99.

Most curious of all, and most shameful, is his "Hymn of Man" (pp. 109—124). There he upbraids *our* God with the existence of many evil things—gibbets and stakes, torture, terror, treason, and such-like—and demands "Glory to Man in the highest! for Man is the master of things." And apparently he has not the least consciousness that man (with a capital letter) is then and there made chargeable with all those evils, gibbets, stakes, torture, terror, and treason, for which his predecessor in divinity has been dismissed with insult. Now perhaps a poet needs not to be logical, but in that case he ought not to be theological.

* *Science of Religion*, p. 143.

Francis converted the wolf. At his triumphal presentation, all the Hindoo gods bow to him. He, being the only pure and true god, conquers all the false gods in battle in the land of Saulti. He whose joy was to expect Nirvana (which always implies extinction, immediate or at hand) resides for ever in a hall of glory above the sixth heavens, from whence he allots the destinies of all men upon earth.* The whole argument may be compressed into one sentence of the famous authority whom we have already quoted:—"The Buddhist legends teem with miserable miracles attributed to Buddha and his disciples—miracles which for wonders certainly surpass the miracles of any other religion; yet in their own sacred canon a saying of Buddha is recorded, prohibiting his disciples from working miracles."†

One of the fairest characters in history has thus been transformed into a being whose conduct he would have scorned, and whose theology he would have execrated. The story of Buddha

* *Asiatic Researches*, vii. 34; vi. 182, 269.

† Max Müller, *Science of Religion*, p. 27.

proves indeed that a teacher may easily be transformed into a quasi-god by a creed which has no true theism, much less a rigid monotheism, to protect it. But it also proves that in the process every trace of the real life will be distorted and debased. It proves the impossibility of adding an enormous legendary structure to the temple of history without confusing the original lines and marring the original architecture.* And yet these are not demolished when they are thus desecrated. Instead of a constant process of revision, addition, and excision operating upon the ancient accounts to harmonise them with the new, what really happens is far otherwise. Use and old association preserve the primitive story; and it

* "It was only after Buddha had left the world to enter upon Nirvana, that his disciples attempted to recall the sayings and doings of their departed friend and master. At that time, everything that seemed to redound to the glory of Buddha, however extraordinary and incredible, was eagerly welcomed, while witnesses who would have ventured to criticise or reject had no chance even of being listened to" (*Science of Religion*, p. 30). By no such process did the Evangelists become possessed of those coherent narratives, in which all the miraculous and ordinary actions reveal one and the same personality.

exists, in the midst of strange new marvels, long after it has become as incongruous and antique as Cleopatra's Needle on the Thames Embankment. The true story of the Buddha and the myths laugh each other out of countenance, but the miracles of Jesus are in exact and wonderful agreement with His life and teaching. We have identified the very rhythm of His words and penetration of His gaze. The supernatural actions befit the supernatural claims. Between His miracles and those of Gautama, the contrast is as great as between the copper which protects the keel of one ship, and the weeds and barnacles which disfigure and retard another. It is therefore somewhat rash to assume their common origin.

If, again, it is true that the Avatar of Krishna was devised as a counter-weight for the popularity of Buddhism, then India can show also what sort of story is invented by myths of premeditation and design, that very design of eclipsing previous legends to which Strauss attributes our Christian miracles.

Krishna shelters the world from a flood under

a mountain poised on his finger, steals a tree from the gods, marries a thousand wives and begets eighteen thousand sons, and preserves inward purity amid appearances of excessive indulgence.* His literature enjoys in India a special and unflattering exemption from the state laws against indecent publications.† There is no tender pulse of any real humanity in all his story. He, like our Lord, has marks upon his hands and feet and side, and a crown upon his head, but the marks are a mystic and ennobling emblem, and the wreath is of flowers, not of thorns.‡ Why have like causes produced such dissimilar effects? How comes it to pass that blind forces, hysterical fancy, exaggerated rumour, ardent loyalty, and passionate resentment have blended into one consistent and marvellous story, human even when it is most superhuman, lofty, and yet tender beyond compare?

The healthy and well-balanced humanity of

* *Asiatic Researches*, i. 261, 259, 273.

† Rev. C. B. Leupolt, "Recollections of an Indian Missionary," *Ch. Miss. Int.*, 1878.

‡ Dorner, *Development of Christian Doctrine*, i. 7.

Jesus may be measured by comparing a story of His courtesy under provocation with that of the Hindoo Preserver Vishnu. When Simon the Pharisee treats our Lord with rudeness, He neither hastens to notice the affront, nor neglects a fair opportunity of remarking upon it. "I entered into thine house, thou gavest Me no water for My feet. . . . Thou gavest Me no kiss. . . . My head with oil thou didst not anoint."

Vishnu, when lying asleep, was kicked on the breast by a sage who would fain experiment upon his temper, and he at once apologised for not having been awake to greet the philosopher, thanked him for having imprinted on his breast an indelible mark of good fortune, hoped the sage's foot was not hurt in kicking him, and proceeded to chafe it. Thus he proved himself the mightiest god, overcoming all things by gentleness and generosity.* One story is sane and courteous, the other is exaggerated and theatrical. It is a fair specimen of the immense difference between the actions of Jesus and the

* Monier Williams, *Hinduism*, p. 120.

dreams of speculative moralists. But how did the difference arise? To this question there are two conspicuous answers.

We are told that the ascendancy of Christ's real character preserved the story from all admixture of what is vindictive and severe.* And we readily accept what this admission implies. The appetite for marvels offered its energies to Christianity as freely as to Buddhism, and its wonders were exactly of the usual kind. We need not surmise, nor argue, that the action of legend upon His story would have been according to its usual laws, for we have the actual legends, and they are quite of the common sort. As the trees bend over Gautama, and the shadow of one beneath which he rests will not

* So Strauss. "Of the miracles of Moses and the prophets in the Old Testament, why should only the charitable and beneficial, and not the numerous miracles of vengeance, have been imitated, except because the spirit of Christ was a different spirit from that of Moses and Elias?" (*New Life*, i. 205.) He is utterly wrong in pretending that "miracles of vengeance" were not "imitated." In the Apochryphal Gospels the boy Jesus deals out death and destruction until his very parents are in terror of their lives; and if he does not come to dinner no person dares eat a morsel. But the true story had a power which no enemy, no distorting influence, could resist or permanently contend against.

move with the moving of the sun, so the palm reaches down its fruit to the infant Jesus, and a fountain gushes at its root. As the boy Gautama draws a bow which a thousand men had failed to bend, so the boy Jesus lengthens out a piece of timber which His father, "who was not a very skilful workman," cut too short when making a throne for the King of Jerusalem. But while other religions succumbed to these influences, the infidel rightly confesses that the character of Jesus had power to shake them off and feel no harm :—

"The ethereal mould,
Incapable of stain, 'did' soon expel
Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire
Victorious."

But how can the infidel aver, at one and the same time, that the true idea of Jesus was strong enough to resist the imputation of vindictiveness, and also that it was too feeble to reject the imputation of being Divine? Is it possible that He could resist the pressure of all the Old Testament plagues and judgments, and of that desire to rival these which (as we are assured) created the whole tradition of His

miracles, and yet that He yielded to apotheosis without a struggle? This notion that the true character of Jesus brooded over the mythical period, and inspired the tears for Lazarus, and healed His persecutor's ear, contrasts strangely with that other notion of those vast revolutionary changes which have wiped out all record of His ever calling God His Lord, ever praying with any one, or desiring the prayer of any for Him, or ever confessing any sin. And the plea ill becomes that same sceptic who tells us that as early as the destruction of Jerusalem Jesus would not have known Himself again.*

It is answered, secondly, that Hebrew literature gave to the miracles of Jesus their peculiar colour. "Isaiah had prophesied that at that time—*i.e.*, the time of the Messiah—the eyes

* "Even Christ the risen, upon whom the Church was founded, is quite a different being from what the man Jesus had been, and it is upon that conception of Christ the risen that not only the conception of His earthly life, but also the Church itself, was so moulded that it becomes a very doubtful question whether, if Jesus had returned about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, He would have recognised Himself again in the Christ who was at that time being preached" (Strauss, *New Life*, ii. 433-4).

of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall hear; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the stammerer speak flowingly: thus it was known *in detail* (!) what sort of miracles Jesus, being the Messiah, must have performed.”*

One asks in astonishment whether the “details” of this very passage would not, on such a theory, have demanded a miracle of waters in the wilderness and streams in the desert; and whether Isaiah’s Messiah, with garments dyed, upheld by His fury, and fighting a battle of burning and of fuel of fire, could possibly have coerced the early Christian imagination to abstain from attributing violence or force to the miracles it was creating?

Meanwhile, the records of Judaism, with all its heroes and sages, were a snare intricately woven for the feet of the mythologist. Behold, it said, in the footprints of His prototypes the track which your hero must needs follow. Show us a prophet like Moses, the politician emancipator and formalist. Show us one sitting

* Strauss, *New Life*, i. 202.

on the throne of David, founder of an empire, restorer of victory to a broken race.

We can see that compliance with these demands meant ruin, the loss of originality, that a dying echo of voices already hushed and antiquated could never have been the Word of God. One's shadow cannot rise to be one's antitype; and the most faithful copyist of Moses would be most unlike Moses, who was original and primitive. But it is equally certain that M. Renan's genial young enthusiast would have been fired by some one or other of those great examples,* and that the myths of Strauss would have diverged widely from

* Renan certainly does not conceive that the youthful Jesus was proof against such influences. He felt "the common tendencies with which the wants of that time inspired all noble spirits" (p. 37). "People were persuaded that nearly all the somewhat mysterious traits of those books" (the Prophets and Psalms) "applied to the Messiah, and sought to find there the type of Him who should realise the hopes of the nation. Jesus shared the taste of all the world for these allegorical interpretations" (pp. 38-9). "The approach of Messiah with His glories and terrors, the nations trampling on each other, the convulsion of heaven and earth, were the familiar food of His imagination" (p. 40). "If He had not been an enthusiast, misled by the apocalypses on which the popular fancy fed itself, He would only have been an obscure sectary" (p. 283).

each other, in pursuit of their various favourites, not seeking fresh moral impulses, but vaster exploits than were recorded of their prototypes, and confounding bulk with greatness.*

Habit and a different state of things blind us to the inspiration which was needed to strike out a new path, refusing the jurisprudence of Moses, the crown of David, the vestments of Melchisedek, despising alike the power of statutes, victories, and hecatombs, and yet claiming for Himself a glory of which all these are but reflected rays.†

The problem which a Christ would have to solve, but which was not formally propounded to His consciousness, was this: Be king, prophet,

* Strauss himself admits that the mythical tendency would be controlled by Old Testament precedent. "As the national legend of the Hebrews had attributed to Moses a series of such miracles as might then be read in the sacred books, it was natural that miracles should in like manner be expected" (*New Life*, i. 361). A Messiah shaped by such impulses could never have become the original and primitive conception of the Gospels.

† "Spite of all the plenitude of prophecy, the way was not marked out for the Messiah. Here there were pictures of kings, and here of prophets, here Divine wonders, here human deeds and acts of self-denial. . . . Which way was Jesus after all to go?" (Keim, ii. 321.)

priest; catch the various and antithetical excellencies of hero and teacher, sage and mediator, so completely that all the great shall be a mere picture and shadow, thou the reality and substance; and in this combination let none predominate to the injury of the rest; contrive at the same time to be completely and supremely unique, allowing thy functions to imitate none, while so completely satisfying the drift of all who went before as for ever to abrogate their methods; make every one a type of thee; suffer no one to resemble thee. Jesus has done this. To Him the mighty traditions of His race were like the pier along which Galahad in the legend advances to his crown, far in the spiritual city:—

“ Ancient kings

Had built a way where, link'd with many a bridge,
A thousand piers ran into the great sea.
And Galahad fled along them, bridge by bridge,
And every bridge, as quickly as he cross'd
Sprang into fire and vanish'd.”

The fulfilment of type and prophecy is much; it is much also to be original—what, then, is the combination of the two?

Moreover, it is essential to the mythical theory that the creators of the story did not aim at originality. They did mimic and parody the Old Testament in a quite preposterous way. Because Moses healed the leprosy of the princess Miriam, for whom a nation mourned, and had before exhibited the same disease and its cleansing before the court of Egypt, and because Elisha healed the leprosy of the victorious favourite of a formidable monarch, therefore the dignity of the Messiah required Him to heal a few nameless wretches and forbid them to speak of their relief.*

Because Moses turned all the water of Egypt into blood, therefore the creators of the legend could not rest until they persuaded themselves that Christ had once filled a few pots with wine, which we all know to be a type of blood.

Because it is twice mentioned that Moses fed a whole nation during forty years with angel's food, Christ, to equalise matters, twice bestowed upon a crowd one meal of barley-bread. Because a feast of love went with

* Strauss, *New Life*, ii. 173.

the sacramental bread, and because Moses gave quails with the manna, therefore in the Messianic miracle there were fish with the bread. And, besides, the Jews murmured for the fish of Egypt, among other luxuries which the Messianic legends neglected to supply, forgetting doubtless the garlic and the leeks. The fragments were gathered into baskets, partly because the sacramental crumbs were sacred, and partly because the manna was gathered into homers.*

Because six hundred thousand men besides women and children passed through the Red Sea, while the host of Egypt perished, therefore Jesus crossed a lake which was by no means disparted, while Peter ran some risk of being drowned.†

Because Israel heard God speaking out of the midst of the fire, when the mountain burned up to heaven, and the trumpet waxed louder

* Strauss, *New Life*, ii. 252—266. "We have," he boasts, "definitively accounted for the origin of all the individual features of the narrative" (p. 265).

† *Ibid.* ii. 246—9.

and louder, and the nation cried for relief from its intolerable dread, the Messiah, not to be outstripped, spoke not indeed with God, but, for a substitute, with Moses and Elijah, while three of His followers could hardly keep awake, and the rest were vainly trying to drive a devil out of a child.* It is of something in this account that we are gravely told that "pains are taken to outdo the Mosaic history."

Who does not feel that if our celebrated sceptic had only given us enough of this material, he would have been as amusing as the pathos of a fashionable romance, and as plausible as its plot?

These pallid and abortive attempts to parody a little—a very little—of the Old Testament splendour† would, indeed, betray a poor in-

* Strauss, *New Life*, ii 281—3.

† Of the glaring contrast, Strauss himself is delightfully unconscious—for, indeed, utter absence of humour was necessary to the inventor of his theory. He tells us that "as Elijah and Elisha had each raised a dead body to life, so *Jesus the Messiah must have done at least as much.*" And again, "*to excel the prophet*, it was necessary" (*New Life*, ii. 206, 253). The author of *Supernatural Religion*, has accepted the same curious theory, that the New Testament miracles are an attempt to rival the Old Testament in a display of mere force. "The Gospels, even in ascribing such

genuity and a sickly imagination. Yet we are assured that these same puny plunderers, in these same contemptible parodies, were shaping the most adorable figure in all the cycle of history and legend. With these rusty

miracles to Christ, are a touching illustration of the veneration excited by His elevated character. Devout enthusiasm surrounded His memory with the tradition of the *highest exhibitions of power within the range of Jewish imagination*" (!) (i. 151).

So also Schenkel writes, "It was required that Jesus should not be inferior to the typical men of the Old Testament. . . How natural it was to ascribe greater and more glorious deeds to one who was unquestionably greater than Moses and more glorious than Elijah" (pp. 21, 22). Quite natural; and scepticism is bound to show why the New Testament miracles make no such attempt. It is instructive to put side by side the last quotation and the following passage from the same Schenkel. "Everything was renounced by Him which the Jew of tradition held dear. . . If Jesus hoped to work as the Messiah, it could only be done by boldly and decidedly going against prophecies, and against the expectation of His countrymen with regard to the Messianic era" (p. 99). And the disciples whom He succeeded (according to the theory) in persuading to do this, straightway proceeded (according to the same theory) to envelop His figure in this haze of Old Testament legend.

The more sympathetic criticism of Keim is aware of "the great difference between the works of Jesus and those of the prophets, there being in the latter a preponderance of nature miracles, in the former, to an altogether disproportionate extent, a preponderance of miracles of healing, in which, moreover, Jesus accomplished His purpose essentially by His mere words, without means, without water, or salt, or meal, or figs, without a rod and without incubation. Many of these works are directly and inseparably bound up with the original words of Jesus or with attested historical facts" (iii. 171).

shackles of tradition and precedent on their wrists, they were bursting the fetters of the world.

What is more, they were saving the very creed which we are told they caricatured. Where are the religions of Egypt, Babylon, and Tyre? They are dead; they are buried in sombre and profound sepulchres. It is seldom that a lonely student spells out painfully the inscription upon the walls of their funereal vaults. Where is the bright and romantic religion of Greece and Rome? This also is dead, the sweetest poetry could only embalm it, we gaze upon the fair features, but there is no voice nor any to answer us—" 'tis Greece, but living Greece no more." And if the religions of the East live on, they are bedridden, blind, paralysed, and imbecile, and only serve to emphasise the difference between senility and eternal youth. But where is the religion of Judæa? It lives, transmuted and exalted above its former self: its temples overtop our proudest palaces: its narrow intolerance has been shaken off, like the husk of a chrysalis

from the winged and lovely creature whose flight is to be henceforth unfettered as the winds.

And you think this unique immortality was given to it by a series of contemptible plagiarisms upon itself?

Nothing less than an indisputable resurrection has to be explained. The hopes, the convictions of God's ancient people, and whatever made Israel dwell alone among the nations, all this was buried in the grave dug for the nation by the steel of Rome. But the stone is removed, and the creed is abroad in the world again, ten times more beautiful and bright, "raised a spiritual body," in the faith of Jesus, the divine creed which fills the world to-day. And the sceptic's only explanation of this great fact is droller than a farce. We ask him to account for a perfect originality which perfectly conforms itself to intricate and multiform predictions; we invite him to solve the problem of a human character which is at once simple, kindly, blameless, and prodigious in its assump-

tions, and his answer is like a poor guess at a bad conundrum, that, perhaps, the five porches at Bethesda were suggested by the five books of Moses, which could not heal the impotence of man; that perhaps he had lain there eight-and-thirty years because that was the space for which Israel was turned back into the wilderness upon refusing to invade Canaan; that perhaps when the crowds were fed there were left seven baskets full of fragments to typify the seven deacons, or twelve to symbolise the twelve apostles.*

And he thinks that by a process so idiotic, Judaism was uplifted into Christianity, and the character of Jesus was wrought out. That thus was generated this power to meet the

* Strauss, *New Life*, ii. 167. Tortured by such a process, any words will accept any meaning. Early in this century Sir W. Drummond discovered the book of Joshua to be a record of the reform of the calendar. The twelve tribes were the twelve months, or perhaps the signs of the zodiac. The seven-fold compassing of Jericho represented the seven days of the week. The five kings of the Amorites were the five intercalary days. Deborah was the star Aldeboran. Joshua was the sun in Aries. When he took Ai with 30,000 men, concealing 5,000 of them in ambush, and killed 12,000 inhabitants, these figures represented the thirty days of the month, the five intercalary days, and the twelve months of the year.

demands of new races, times, and principles, this firmness amid ten thousand shocks, this iron hand to grasp the reins of human progress, and roll in the dust whoever has disputed for eighteen centuries its right to be the charioteer, all embodied in the simple story of one inhabitant of Nazareth.

Well, then, we may at least congratulate him upon his courage when he taunts the Christian with credulity, for there is no miracle in the inspired volume so contrary to experience or so wildly incredible as this.

VI.

“Jesus Christ is beloved. Among great men, who are loved? Among warriors? Is it Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne? Among sages? Aristotle or Plato? Name me even one, a single man who has died and left love upon his tomb! Mahomet is venerated by Mussulmans, he is not loved. One man alone has gathered from all ages a love which never fails: Jesus Christ is the Sovereign Lord of hearts as He is of minds. . . . Jesus Christ is adored. A man, mortal and dead, He has obtained adoration which still endures, and of which the world offers no other example. What emperor has held his temples and his statues? What has become of all that population of gods created by human adulation? Even their dust exists no longer: Jesus Christ alone remains. . . . And upon what throne do men adore Him? Upon a cross!”—LACORDAIRE, *Conferences*.

“WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST? WHOSE SON IS HE?”

Matt. xxii. 42.

WE have now reached the last Lecture of this course. We have argued that, if the miraculous power and divine sonship of our Lord were afterthoughts—new pieces sewn upon the old garment of a career which though admirable was only human—then the patchwork would be visible.* We have traced, however, the same threads woven into all the texture, and have inferred that the whole fabric is the product of one loom.

How incredible is any other theory. First we have a sage. To him, rumour and superstition add the powers of an exorcist and magician, unless we prefer to think, with many rationalists, that frenzy was really vanquished and diseases charmed away, by “the presence of a superior man . . . the contact of an

* “In histories of this kind, the great sign that we have found the truth is to have been able to unite the texts in such wise as to form a narrative, logical, credible, wherein nothing jars” (Renan, p. ci.).

exquisite personality . . . the pleasure of such a sight . . . the gift of what could be given, a sigh, a hope, which were not unavailing.”*

Persons of unsettled views are often helped in their scepticism by a vague impression that the miraculous part of Christ's history is doubted, and therefore is probably doubtful.

And perhaps few things would surprise many of them more than to discover how general, among thoughtful teachers of a sceptical theology, is the admission that Jesus wrought among us the works which none other man did—joined, of course, with the protest that these works are not to be called miracles. It is not the sentimental Frenchman alone who thinks that in many cases the charm of His presence was “worth all the resources of medicine,” and “the best remedy was the Saintly Man.”

Although Schenkel will not allow “the limits

* One needs not to say that these fine phrases belong to Renan, who is, indeed, so confident in his position as to dismiss peremptorily the notion that ocular testimony for miracles is not forthcoming (pp. 270, 271, 505).

of human nature" to be broken through, yet he agrees with Hase that Jesus may have cured even leprosy, and insists that the story in the first chapter of Mark must be authentic; only striving hard to clip the skirt of the miracle, and thinking that "the leper was already in an advanced state of cure." To him, as to Renan, the marvels are "to be explained psychologically, as the effects of His personality."* Ewald regards the successful treatment of disease by Christ as partly mental and moral, and partly due to the use of external means. It was under the spell of His influence that "water became the best wine," and "the smallest external means" removed the hunger of five thousand men.

* Pages 73, 366, 367, 20. Schenkel's only proof that the leper was already almost well, is curious: "the fact that he went into the house where Jesus was, implies that he was not in a worse state" (p. 73). Nothing can be more incorrect. The Law made his uncleanness continue, even upon recovery, until the priest had purified him, and for this purification Schenkel allows that Jesus sent the sufferer to apply (Lev. xiv. 1—32). But the Law regarded "a man *full* of leprosy" as clean (Lev. xiii. 12, 13), so that the fact of the leper's entering the house proves the severity, not the lightness of his affliction. (This curious regulation is discussed by Dr. Hayman in Smith's *Bible Dictionary*: "Leper.")

Even Strauss, until he despaired of unriddling the problem of the sacred life, and retired baffled from the field in which he won his fame—even he confessed that “supposed miracles may have been really performed,” that “many sick persons, when in His presence, felt themselves relieved, and either permanently or transiently better,” the ailments thus tractable, as he tells us, being “mental, nervous, and even muscular diseases.”* “Impressions half-spiritual, half-sensuous,” are his explanation of these phenomena, but we have to regret that he cannot decide for us “whether exactly such a complaint as that of the issue of blood was thus curable.” He is, however, as certain that leprosy could not be thus dealt with as Schenkel is certain that it could.†

And here a curious lapse of this remarkable man may be observed in passing. It is necessary to the theory in question that Jesus should be irresistably impelled toward the rank of a wonder-worker by popular expectation, since nothing else will account for the beginning of this

* *New Life*, ii. 150.

† *Ibid.* i. pp. 365, 367.

strange belief. Accordingly Strauss tells us that "miracles He must perform whether He would or not. As soon as He was considered a prophet . . . miraculous powers were attributed to Him, and as soon as they were attributed to Him, they came of course into operation."

This is very well; but at the first how came He to attain the prophetic rank? "We cannot doubt" (our sceptic answers, who can doubt so much) "that *He* might attain this character as well as the Baptist, even without miracles."*

Thus we are, in the same paragraph, assured that the belief in miracles was inevitable, and reminded that the Baptist escaped from it.

Observe how the matter now stands.

There is before us the admirable record of a simple life. There is also the record of a vast number of diverse diseases said to be strangely healed. And so true to the character of Jesus, so life-like, is this second record that the ablest and most acute unbelievers admit every incident

* i. 365.

for which any explanation, however forced, can be discovered, rejecting only those from which no hand, how rude soever, can tear away the crown of superhuman dignity.

If Ewald can persuade himself that the widow of Nain's son was in a trance, Ewald will take the word of Luke for his revival.

If Schenkel can persuade himself that leprosy will disappear before a dignified sympathy, Schenkel will believe Mark that it was cleansed.

If Strauss is uncertain whether fine behaviour will charm away an issue of blood, Strauss will not decide whether Matthew's narrative may be trusted.

But nowhere is there any thought of the very striking and identical character who gave the youth of Nain to his mother, and reached out His hand to touch the leper's foulness, and said, "Daughter, be of good cheer."

Yet this conception surely requires the grave attention of all who know what myths can really achieve, and where their arm is broken.

Nowhere is there any sufficient attempt to contrast the wonders which are thus admitted

with the miracles which are still denied, or to show any real difference between the hero of history and of romance, between the artistic conception, the dramatising, of what is true and what is false. And yet, upon any sceptical theory, this might easily be done, and would richly repay the doing.

Nor is this the only startling omission of the theory. For this exorcist and magnetiser presently develops into Almighty God; and yet the closest examination of a story, so confused and diverse in its origin, reveals the finest coherence, the most curious consistency of character. Does not this fact merit a little exertion of that painful ingenuity which found the five books of Moses reproduced in the five porches of Bethesda? It is no dry father of the Church, but a witty pagan who warns us that all such compound organisations will fail, that a painter will be laughed at who sets the head of a man upon the neck of a horse, that purple patches are not to be sewn upon a plain garment, that if you begin to shape a vase upon the wheel, it cannot then be turned into a

pitcher. What would Horace have thought of beginning with a Galilean and ending with a God? The opening lines of the *Ars Poetica* refute many heretics.

Impossible in itself, the theory is more so when we take account of the quality, the energy of the creation. No unreal personage wields a power like the power of Jesus. The myths of India cover like a veil the sleeping and impassive face of Asia, but when the voice of Europe penetrates her slumber, her first uneasy movement begins to shake them off. But Jesus leads the West in her wakeful quest for truth, fires her energies, develops her originality, inspires her exploits, peoples the oceans with her ships and the wilds with her colonies. He is, as Paul described Him, not only a living soul, but a life-imparting Spirit.*

Here the story of Jesus parts company with every creation of human genius. The noblest figures painted by the grandest literary artists hang idly on the walls of the great picture-galleries of culture. Achilles is no longer de-

* ψυχὴν ζῶσαν. . . πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν (1 Cor. xv. 45).

sired in battle. The wandering Ulysses is sighed for in Ithaca no more. What's Hecuba to us? The murder of Duncan, the wrongs of the Prince of Denmark, the broken heart of Lear—what politics do these affect? of what parties are they the rallying-cry? The party of Jesus; that is, the holy Church throughout all the world.

To-day there is scarcely an unbaptised race which enjoys liberty, or even sighs for it; there is not a Christian people to whom freedom is not dearer than life; there is not a nation of the reformed faith in whose ears her voice is not full and clear as the wind among mountain pines. As it was foretold that the Son should make us free indeed, so the face of the world has become our sufficient evidence that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

But if His sublime energies were never born in dreamland, what shall be said of His sublime perfections? Mythology can scarcely produce one group of stainless, not to say perfectly exalted, myths. The mightiest poets of character produce their effects by weighing some heroic

endowment against inevitable human frailties.* Unfettered by history, as free to group events and passions about their central figure as a painter to arrange forms and pigments at his will, yet they have not dared to withhold shadows, and deep ones, from their central personage Himself. No artist ever worked without dark colours as well as bright ones. The energy of Lear is reckless; the penetration of Hamlet lacks decision; the gallant love of Othello cannot trust nor suspect aright; and all these are studiously set off by contrast with some almost abstract villany.

Mr. Tennyson indeed has painted an ideal knight, but he has wisely given us few of his large, divine, and comfortable words. And in the most pathetic scene of the poetry of our age, when the hands of Arthur's fallen wife are laid about his feet, and he forgives her as Eternal God forgives, he finds it necessary to

* "Tragedy is not a collection of virtues and perfections, but takes care only that the vices and imperfections shall spring from the passions, errors, and prejudices which arise out of the soul" (Coleridge, *Shakespearian Notes*, p. 9).

explain the fact that he still loves her. And the ideal knight's high-minded explanation to Guinevere is that

His love *through flesh* (!) has wrought into his life
So far that his doom is, he loves her still.

Milton, again, has ventured, with instructive results, upon one scene of the perfect life; and if any one wishes to measure the difference between the inspiration of Scripture and that of genius, let him contrast the four laboured books of the *Paradise Regained* with the eleven homely verses which open the fourth chapter of St. Matthew. The true Jesus is never said to have soliloquised—He is never alone, for God is with Him, and His consciousness, pillowed on the bosom of the Eternal, always when disengaged returns to the communion of praise or prayer. But Art cannot dispense with so powerful a method of exhibiting the heart, and Milton invents many monologues, one of them ninety-eight lines in length, in which Jesus recites His early ambitions, and how He was “admired of all” when He was young (Book i. 196—293). His dreams are of meat and

drink (ii. 264). His temptation is supposed to be heightened when Satan, who appeals in Scripture to unsophisticated appetite and the need of bread, offers dishes pil'd, meats of noblest sorts and savours, game in pastry built, roast meat, boiled meat, all fish (for which the Black Sea and the African coast were drained, not to speak of freshet or purling brook), wines also, served by tall striplings in fine dresses, besides nymphs in the background, and Naiades, and ladies of the Hesperides (ii. 340—360). Even a vulgar nature would have been alarmed rather than allured by such unwonted splendours, which, however, would not have been left for Milton to celebrate, if the Gospel history owed much to the mythic impulse. Tempted with fame, He makes the answer, impossible to Him, that nothing belongs to man but condemnation, ignominy, and shame (iii. 136). Presently, however, instead of fighting and conquering, as in Matthew, simply as man and for His brethren, He claims privilege as "the Son of God" (iv. 190).

After this melancholy collapse, we may

understand why Shakspeare, who impressed the grandest of his critics with "the belief of his genius being supernatural" and "of angelic strength," never attempts an ideal virtue. The same critic writes that "Kent is perhaps the nearest to perfect goodness of all his characters: there is an extraordinary charm in his bluntness"—which, however, is not an ideal grace.*

In this dearth of ideals, and after having condemned the great Conception of the Gospels, M. Renan proposes to minister to our distress. He has studied the subject carefully. He is not only a dexterous but a fearless literateur,† who will apply the finest words you can conceive as craftily as a painter works in oils. Thus he is able to assure the people—the French people—that they are religious in the best way, being brave, serene, desirous of instruction, careless of ridicule, fond of such works of poetry and art as produce grave emotions.‡

* Coleridge, *Shak. Notes*, pp. 135, 138, 192.

† "In such an effort to quicken again the high souls of the past, some share of divination and of conjecture ought to be allowed" (p. c.).

‡ *Vie de Jésus*, Ed. pop. 19th edition, pp. vi., vii.

Specially for this remarkable people, who at that time had Louis Napoleon for its Lord's anointed, and George Sand for his prophet, and as a variation upon that conception of Jesus which he sells at a considerable price, he has been thoughtful enough to provide, at a very moderate rate, the Jesus of his popular editions, which he declares to be not only cheaper, but also "more poetic and edifying," and indeed recommends highly, as perhaps even a better article. "This time," he exclaims, "it is a Christ in white marble which I present to the public, hewn out of a block without stain, simple and pure *as the sentiment which created it*. My God!" (he cries in this "poetic and edifying" mood of his) "perhaps it is also more true" (pp. iv., v.), which might have been considered before publishing that other life which was not created by a sentiment. Here, then, is exactly what we want. Here is an ideal constructed for us by the person who demolished our old one, and therefore knows exactly of what errors to beware.

Alas ! we presently find this Jesus in stainless marble (just like the former one), overwhelmed and seduced by admiration and drunk with love, behaving haughtily, disdainful in poverty, well pleased with Mary's languor which often threw her practical duties upon Martha, hurried into rash words by bad temper, perhaps doubtful of his work, mastered by terror and hesitation, accepting and learning to enjoy titles in which he did not believe, perhaps tacitly sanctioning 'fictive genealogies.* This is the sort of marble which Art would pass off upon us for a spotless white. This is all that literature can invent for us, to replace the Christ of Christendom.†

Once more, we ask whence comes the one picture which is lifelike without shadows,

* Pages 157, 164, 192, 200, 215, 152, 153, *Ed. Pop.*

† The high-flown literary methods work as ill with a document as with a person. Mr. Matthew Arnold is, in his own fashion, as accomplished an artist as M. Renan ; and these two have let their minds play freely upon the Gospel of St. John. M. Renan assures us that the narrative and incidents are mainly historical, the discourses invented (lxix., lxxvii., large edition); Mr. Arnold says, "Reverse the proposition, and it would be more plausible" (*Literature and Dogma*, p. 170).

the one ideal figure in literature, the one person who, from past ages, dominates the world to-day?

He is not drawn as Art portrays her characters. As we saw that He Himself never soliloquises, so does no person soliloquise much about Him,* and a sacred awe prevents any evangelist from telling us much about His features, His bearing, or His tones. We have no picture at a stroke like that of the angry spot glowing on Cæsar's brow, or of Socrates sitting on the bed, and bending his leg together to rub it with his hands while he began to discourse about what men call pleasure.†

No one gushes into rhapsodies about Him, as Macaulay does about the asthmatic skeleton who covered the slow retreat of England, and upon whom danger acted like wine; or as Mr. Carlyle does about his Oliver, whom we

* I think the only exception is the Baptist's second utterance of the words, "Behold the Lamb of God" (*John* i. 36), spoken as he gazed on Jesus, and apparently overheard by the two disciples, rather than addressed to them.

† *Julius Cæsar*, i. 2. *Phædo*, 60.

shall increasingly misjudge unless our own life is beautiful and terrible to us, steeped in the eternal depths, in the eternal splendours.* How paltry, how audacious would be fine writing when applied to that sacred story! And is it not plain that our modest and slender records of a very few years—so colourless and dispassionate—never could have succeeded unless they were drawn from life? “The inventor,” said Rousseau, “would have been more astonishing than the hero.”

Whence came the story, the belief, not to insist upon the living Person?

This is pre-eminently a question for the present day, for an age that never wearies of telling us that Nature cannot be tampered with, that everything is a result of purely natural causes, which may be sought and found. We are to ascertain, presently, after what fashion the ascidian pushed its upward way until it scrambled into manhood. Such views we are not now called upon either to affirm or to deny. But the one development which can never be dis-

* *England*, iv. 15, iii. 187. *Cromwell*, ii. 144.

puted is the development of men into Christian men. Was that event natural, or was it the great power of God? Come back from remote ages and strange scenes, where you may see much, but may also dream or fancy almost what you will, like one who gazes into the fire; return, and consider the extremely well-defined period between the crucifixion of Jesus and the earliest undisputed Epistle of St. Paul; reflect that we are Christians, after all, not so much through our belief in a muscle of the throat, in the arch of the foot, in the angle at which our great toe is planted, as by virtue of our belief in the incarnation of God in Jesus—and confess that you may have explained all these pieces of mechanism, besides the beginning of life, of sensation and of consciousness, without having explained our Lord. This you have still to do. Show us the natural causes which developed a Hebrew of Hebrews into a worshipper of a Nazarene carpenter. What a tempting subject for our new theories is the development of a Christian, the development of the worship of Christ! You have told us that nothing comes from nothing, and you have

silently deduced the surprising corollary that nothing comes from God. To the poor the new gospel has been preached, that man is entirely made up of the forces around him, his parents and his wet-nurse, his education, and, let us not forget, his food.* For "Man is what he eats,"† and of course this high-minded saying includes the Christian man. "Our meat and drink . . . have a perfectly transcendental value," and "man carries with him" you assure us, "the physical texture of his ancestry as well as the inherited intellect."‡ "The effects of the most uniform and frequent experiences have been successfully bequeathed, principal and interest."§

So be it. And the most constant experience of all, inherited from countless brutal generations (through which it, indeed, has uplifted us to manhood), is that success depends on strength, cunning, and adaptability; that what is weak must perish, and that the fittest will

* *Moleschott.*

† *Feurbach.*

‡ Prof. Tyndall, *Belfast Address*, pp. 31, 50.

§ Herbert Spencer, *Psychology.*

survive ; that the hope and pride of every creature is to succeed, to trample, to grasp, to push forward, to assert itself, to live. And yet, in the world's worst hour, when art, culture, poetry, sculpture, and song were in chains at the feet of a despot ; when paganism was adoring impartially cats and Cæsars ; when the gladiator was more enviable, and the lost more pure than the Ruler of the world—the inheritors of these accumulated traditions of blood, and lust, and selfishness, the posterity and the rivals of brute beasts, adore an executed carpenter ; adore Him because He submits to the anguish of being crushed out of existence ; adore Him chiefly and above all because He defies the instinct which was branded upon their very souls, because He laughs to scorn your blessed and elevating gospel of the survival of the fittest. “From nothing comes nothing” you tell us, and “every occurrence has its cause from which it follows by necessity.”* Tell us, then, whence comes loyalty to duty against self-interest, whence the sublime instinct of self-sacrifice ?

* *Belfast Address*, p. 40.

How come they to culminate when the land of Joshua, David, and the Maccabees is the prey of Herodians, Sadducees, and scribes, and has advanced no further on the slow road to the development of Jesus, than from Solomon and Isaiah to Herod, Annas, and Caiaphas? Can your microscope discover, in any group of molecules, the germ of those memorable words of one of the weakest who go (as you have tenderly put it) to the wall*—"Father forgive them, for they know not what they do?"

Certainly the beginning of our Christian age reveals an utterly new force doing strange work in the world. Its enemies complain that it turns the world upside down: it does more. It turns the very virtues also upside down:† it dethrones pride, ambition, worldly wisdom; it boasts of being foolishness to men; it crowns the attributes which sages branded on the forehead—lowliness of mind, readiness to suffer

* Tyndall, *Belfast Address*, p. 40.

† Even more striking than the familiar examples appears to me the contrast between the manner in which Christ redeemed the world, and the assertion of Aristotle that "it is a greater part of virtue to act well than to suffer well" (*Ethics. Nicom.* iv. i).

wrong, pity and helpfulness toward the fallen, the lost, the unjust, the tyrant who smote you yesterday and will smite you again to-morrow. It makes itself obeyed: it is owned as the great power of God. It points to One despised and rejected, the scorn of men and outcast of the people, with a visage more marred than that of any man; and it tells the Jew "they who spat upon this Man, buffeted His face, and cast out His name as evil, are the princes of thy race and creed; now remember clearly that the Lord thy God is one Lord, and pray to this Carpenter." And the Jew bows his head. It turns to the Gentile and says, "Thy rulers have scourged and crucified this Person; shame and anguish have wrought their worst upon Him: now therefore crown Him with many crowns, and forsake the stately altars of ivy-crowned Bacchus, and rosy Venus, and ever-young Apollo, for the shrine of the Man of Sorrows." And the Gentile world falls upon its knees, to burn all that it has worshipped, and to worship all that it has burned.

How was this victorious force developed? From the natural causes which produced the Twelve Apostles, their parents and wet-nurses, not forgetting that paramount value of their meat and drink? It ought, perhaps, to be carefully considered whether the national appetite for milk and honey, marrow and fat things, and wine upon the lees, had in any degree been modified; for of such a discovery the doctrinal importance would be "perfectly transcendental." May not this meaning lurk in Renan's strange words about the disciples having "refreshed themselves with some drops of a very noble wine?" *

Mankind, when the Apostles began their work, resembled the lame man of their earliest miracle: around were the glories of mountain and river; within, the awe and reverence of the temple. But the race was impotent and palsied, nature had lost its pure impulses, philosophy could not give us power over our passions.

To this prostrate and helpless humanity the

* *Les Apotres*, p. 20.

sages had vainly preached the beauty and the advantages of active life, but only these obscure and humble men could say, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth arise and walk." And it was so. They did turn the world upside down. They did pour into a new channel the torrent of the ages, whose drops are lives of men.*

And all experience confirms their protest that their own power and holiness have not wrought this marvel, that when they are weak they are strong, that the name of Christ, through faith in His name, has done it all. Whose Son is He? In the Palestine of the year One, what is there to explain Christ? Did this eagle with sun-sustaining eyes emerge from the slime of the age of Tiberius, the basest age in history? Natural causes, the struggle to exist, the race which is to the swift, and

* This peculiar energy of the faith has not escaped the keen though irreverent eyes of Goethe. He said to Eckermann, "Christianity has a might of its own, by which dejected suffering humanity is elevated from time to time; and when we grant this power, it is raised above all philosophy, and needs no support therefrom" (*Conversations*, Feb. 4, 1829).

the battle to the strong, did these teach a Jew, whose "inherited intellect" and his Law both said, "Thou shalt hate thine enemies," to pray upon His cross for those who nailed Him there? And whence is the trumpet, and whose is the breath in it, which has blown that dying supplication round the world and down the ages, to become for centuries and races the blast of a spiritual resurrection? Who built the throne from which He stretches a rod of iron across the world? How does that pierced and mouldered hand break his foes in pieces, like a potter's vessel? His name lights up with unearthly lustre the painful lives and cruel deaths of a great multitude which no man can number—where has a human being found the colours and the brush to paint across the wildest storm-clouds of existence this never-fading rainbow? Could the rays of an earthly taper, or anything but the pure light of heaven, make our very tears thus radiant?

O God the Son, Redeemer of the world, truly Thy name is above every name! In spite of error, misunderstanding, hatred, scorn, and

blasphemy, in the deadliest hour, when the skies blacken and the earth reels, and it seems that men have, once more, crucified in this dread eclipse the Son of God afresh, still Thy majesty and Thy power are felt, and through the midnight comes the prayer of a penitent, "Lord, remember me," or perhaps the confession of an executioner, "Truly this was the Son of God": still when they dream that Thou art for ever silenced, buried, guarded, and sealed down, the stone is rolled away from the door of the sepulchre; and the keepers grow weak as dead men; and angelic forms are there, like lightning in their terrors for the foe, like young men in their nearness to the faithful; and still, through the grey mists of the morning Thou comest, changed to something august, immortal, half unknown, until the tones of Thy love are heard again, and at Thy voice we know in whom we have believed, and our faith in Thee becomes the victory which overcomes the world.

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